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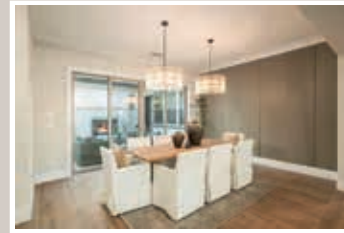
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# Prospecting Like a Pro

## WINNING IN A LOW-INVENTORY MARKET

SHAWN CARDOZA, REALCOP REAL ESTATE COACH

The market is shifting. Inventory is tight. Interest rates are sitting between 6 and 7.5 percent. Buyers are hesitant, and sellers are questioning whether now is the right time to list. So, what does that mean for real estate agents? It means that prospecting is no longer optional—it is essential.

However, not just any kind of prospecting will work in today's climate. The agents who will thrive are the ones focused on consistent, face-to-face, high-quality interactions that build relationships and generate business. In a digital world, personal connections are more valuable than ever. The key to successful prospecting comes down to mastering three crucial elements: Skill, Frequency, and the Number of Connections.

### Developing the Skill of Effective Prospecting

A common misconception among real estate agents is that prospecting is about aggressively selling yourself or your services. The truth is, the best prospectors are those who listen more than they talk.

Instead of jumping into a sales pitch, focus on asking better questions and making the conversation about the client's needs. For example, rather than saying, "Are you looking to sell

your home?" try a more natural, relationship-driven approach: "I know a lot of homeowners are curious about their home's value in this market. Are you planning to stay put for a while, or are you considering a move?"

When prospects respond with hesitation or delay, agents must be skilled in guiding the conversation forward without being pushy. If a potential seller says they are thinking about moving next year, the best response is to provide value and stay connected. A good follow-up might be, "That's great! Many of my clients start planning early. Would it be helpful if I sent you market updates so you can make the best decision when the time is right?"

Prospecting is most effective when it happens in person. Many agents have shifted their entire focus to online marketing, but face-to-face interactions are still the most powerful way to build trust. Getting involved in community events, attending local business gatherings, and simply striking up conversations at coffee shops or grocery stores can open doors to new opportunities. Hosting events such as homeownership workshops or market update sessions also positions an agent as a local expert and builds credibility.

### The Importance of Frequency in Prospecting

One of the biggest reasons agents fail at prospecting is inconsistency. Successful agents do not prospect occasionally—they make it a daily, non-negotiable habit.

The frequency of prospecting directly impacts results. New agents should aim for at least three to four hours of prospecting per day, while experienced agents should maintain at least one to two hours daily. Many agents start strong but lose momentum after a few weeks. However, the agents who consistently show up, day after day, are the ones who build a sustainable pipeline of business.

Daily lead-generating activities should be intentional and varied. Agents can mix different strategies such as calling past clients, door-knocking in their community, engaging on social media in meaningful conversations, Online Lead Follow-up and attending networking events. Each of these methods strengthens relationships and keeps an agent top of mind when someone is ready to buy or sell.

One of the most overlooked areas in prospecting is follow-up. Many agents make one or two attempts to reach out and then move on. However, studies show that most conversions happen after six to eight touches. A structured follow-up plan is essential to ensure that no lead falls through the cracks. A simple yet effective follow-up plan could include a call and text on the first day, a follow-up email with market insights on the third day, another check-in call within a week, and a market update two weeks later. The key is to remain visible without overwhelming or pressuring the prospect.

### Expanding the Number of Connections

Real estate is a numbers game. The more people an agent connects with, the more opportunities they create for themselves. In a competitive market, relying on a small pool of

contacts is not enough. Successful agents focus on continuously expanding their reach by meeting new people and deepening relationships within their community.

Every agent should set a daily goal for the number of people they engage with. A good benchmark is talking to 20 to 30 people per day to generate at least one listing per month. Agents looking to scale their business further should aim for 50 or more daily conversations. The larger the network, the greater the chances of consistent business.

There are several ways to find and connect with new leads. Sphere of Influence (SOI) contacts—such as friends, past clients, and local business owners—are a great place to start. Agents should also focus on FSBOs (For Sale By Owners) and expired listings since these individuals have already expressed an intent to sell but may need guidance from an experienced professional. Community events, neighborhood outreach, and partnerships with local businesses are additional ways to grow an agent's database and generate referrals.

### Turning Prospecting into a Competitive Advantage

Prospecting success is not based on luck—it is a direct result of skills, consistency, and the number of connections made. Agents who dedicate themselves to improving their conversations, reaching out consistently, and expanding their network will always have a steady flow of business.

In a low-inventory market with rising interest rates, the agents who win are not the ones waiting for opportunities to come to them. They are the ones creating opportunities every day by showing up, building relationships, and providing value to their community.

Those who embrace prospecting as a core business activity will thrive. Will you be one of them? Now is the time to take action.

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Coach Holley is a 29-year-old Visalia native, nationally recognized Life Coach and Fitness Trainer with a strong background in professional and collegiate athletics. He teaches the importance behind resiliency and building a strong social and emotional climate. Coach Holley and his team reshape people's thoughts and feelings about themselves and their daily lives.

Absolute Body Armor is a division of Amplify that hosts a diverse range of amenities, such as modern training facilities, instructor-led Classes, personal trainers, nutritionists, and monthly memberships.

While Coach Holley would like to train everyone in-person at the ABA facility, some may not have availability for in-person sessions or live in other places throughout the world. To address this, he developed a virtual training solution through a personally designed app, allowing everyone

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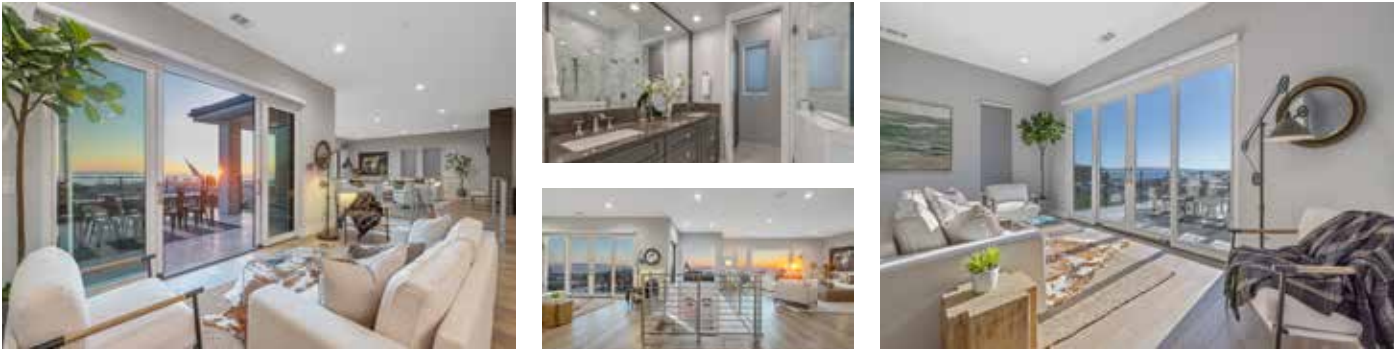


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# Anthony Estrada

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When we think of the perfect living room, the dream bathroom or walk in closet, we usually imagine these places in an ideal climate setting. Having a reliable air conditioning and heating system is very important, especially for those living in the Central Valley. We have extremely hot summers and relatively cold winters. Being proactive by having thorough inspections of your unit annually could help prevent unexpected hot or freezing nights due to a failed unit.

A unit can be old in age, but it can still be in great condition. A unit that has been serviced regularly does not have to work as hard during extreme temperatures. I've seen units that are well over their life expectancy and are still in great shape. In contrast, a unit can heat or cool inefficiently for years without any clear signs to the homeowner. Usually, a major failure occurs from a unit running inefficiently for a long period of time. Missing a thorough inspection of your unit can be detrimental to your system and could be a very costly lesson.

As an HVAC inspector, nothing makes my job easier than inspecting a system that results in a clean report. During inspections, it is a good time to highlight air purifiers, zone systems, and Wi-Fi thermostats. It is also a good time for buyers to ask questions about upgrades to the system that will not only help with the life of the system, but the air quality of the home. During the escrow process, an HVAC inspection can give a buyer and seller peace of mind knowing that there is one less thing that needs to be negotiated.

Overall, inspections and service help us monitor the life of your unit and address any questions or concerns before a sudden need to replace your unit due to failed parts. It is our goal to prevent any rushed decisions. When the time comes to replace your unit, it should be something you prepared for based on a decision that was made from information you received about your system overtime. Nothing adds value to those memories inside your home like a great running air conditioning and heating system.



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# Bryanne GARRETT

## GENTILE REAL ESTATE

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY KIVISTO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMANDA BRAZZELL WITH REAL AUTHENTIC HUMAN MEDIA

### Just Show Up

How Bryanne Garrett has built her real estate career one day at a time—  
and what her story proves about the power of consistency.

Bryanne Garrett may have only been in real estate for four years, but her determination and drive have already taken her far. In 2024, she was named the Top Producer at her brokerage, Gentile Real Estate.

Bryanne spent her early years in Southern California's Santa Clarita area alongside her large family. When she was in fifth grade, her family relocated to Fresno. Just two years later, her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, and Bryanne took on the role of primary caretaker—not only for her mother but also for her five-year-old sister and three-year-old brother. Bryanne's mother was the hardest-working person she had ever known, something Bryanne inherited herself. When Bryanne's mother went into remission during her freshman year of high school, she made the decision to move back to Santa Clarita to live with her father. After graduating, she went straight into the workforce as a retail store manager. When she was offered an opportunity to open a new store in Fresno, she chose to move back—both to be closer to her mother and to begin a new chapter in her life.

Shortly after returning to Fresno in 2011, Bryanne met her future husband, Terrence. The two immediately connected and quickly became inseparable. "He became my roots, and Fresno became home," she says of their bond. They married in 2018 and began building their life together. The early years of marriage came with challenges. Bryanne recalls a particularly difficult time when they had to sell their only car, leaving them both to walk to and from work for an entire year. Through it all, Terrence remained a steady source

of support. She credits his unwavering encouragement for helping her show up every day and push forward. By Christmas of 2024, Bryanne was able to give back in a way that once seemed impossible—gifting her husband a brand-new car, paid for in cash. It marked not only a milestone in their journey but also the first time they had ever owned two vehicles.

In 2020, everything changed for Bryanne. When the COVID pandemic hit, she and her husband were furloughed on the same day. Shortly after, a former district manager from her retail days reached out with an opportunity—an administrative role in her real estate business. Excited for a fresh start, Bryanne eagerly accepted. However, just a month into the new job, tragedy struck. Her mother passed away unexpectedly, setting off a series of devastating events. Her father's

house burned down, her mother's partner passed away, and Bryanne herself underwent emergency surgery to remove a tumor from her uterus. Despite the overwhelming challenges, she remained focused on her new position, using work as an anchor through the chaos.

As an executive assistant, Bryanne handled back-end administrative tasks, led CRM management, generated leads, scripted with agents, and trained others on open houses—all before earning her own license. Teaching these skills gave her a unique advantage when she became a licensed agent in early 2022. By the end of her first year, she had closed 19 deals, relying entirely on organic lead generation and hands-on work at open houses. "My follow-up and consistency never faltered," she says. For Bryanne, consistency has been the key to her success. She makes it a point





to be the first one in the office in the morning and the last to leave at night, a habit that continues to set her apart.

That dedication has paid off. After a successful first year in real estate, Bryanne felt ready for a new challenge and took a meeting with Nico Gentile, owner of Gentile Real Estate, a brokerage often described as a “boutique firm.” Initially, she wasn’t sure she would be the right fit, but that changed the moment she sat down with Nico. “I have never felt so comfortable as I did with Nico,” Bryanne recalls.

After that meeting, she dove in headfirst. She attended every meeting she was welcomed to attend, asked to shadow Nico on appointments, and put herself in the right rooms to absorb as much knowledge as possible. Her training at her first brokerage had



already given her a strong foundation in working with investors, a key focus at Gentile Real Estate. Over time, she built relationships with multiple investors and investment portfolios, further expanding her business.

In 2023, Bryanne closed 26 deals, and in 2024, she finished the year as the Top Producing agent at her brokerage with 52 total closings. She also moved into an executive office and launched her own team, the Garrett Group, a powerhouse of women in real estate. “This all happened very organically,” Bryanne says of her rapid rise in the industry.

Through all of her achievements, Bryanne and Terrence remained focused on building their future. Recently, they closed on their first house together, a renovation project they are excited to take on. It will be a home they will share with their four dogs; Shabba, a 12 year old, Chow mix, Penny, an 8 year old Pitbull/ Chihuahua mix, Nipsey, a 6 year Border Collie/ Shepherd mix, and Slim, a 1 year old mixed breed. Whether she’s relaxing at home with her pups or taking weekend trips to the coast with her husband, Bryanne makes it a priority to enjoy the life they’ve worked so hard to build. But at the heart of it all is a simple philosophy—show up, put in the work, and stay consistent. In her own words: “Just show up!”

Bryanne Garrett is a Realtor® at Gentile Real Estate in Fresno California.





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# Brian GILBERT

## REAL ESTATE BROKER AT THE EQUITY GROUP IN VISALIA, CALIFORNIA.

Brian Gilbert's Vision for Real Estate: Collaboration, Change, and Community Impact

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRISTIAN URENA WITH HOUSEHUB MEDIA • WRITTEN BY ASHLEY KIVISTO



**As the real estate landscape shifts, Brian believes that the biggest challenge is choosing the path that best illustrates the realtor “value proposition” and how that value message translates into a continued long term successful enterprise that best serves its clientele.**

Brian Gilbert grew up in Orange County and graduated from college with his dream job at a marketing firm in Newport Beach. Unfortunately, that firm's owner soon retired and shuttered the company. Next, Brian worked for a federally funded agency that provided underprivileged individuals with job training and skills development to assist in obtaining gainful employment, something that stuck with him throughout his life. In 1983, his parents purchased and restored an abandoned hot springs resort in the southern Sierra Nevada mountains, which they reopened in 1985. In 1989, Brian moved there to manage a new bottled water division, a role he held for a decade. “I think everybody should have to work with their family at some point in

their career,” he jokes. The bottled water venture thrived for several years, at one point ranking as the 24th largest in the country. When market changes prompted their ultimate shut down, Brian transitioned to a procurement role with one of the largest dairy companies in the country.

Brian worked for over a decade in the tumultuous dairy industry, though his entrepreneurial spirit reminded him daily that he was meant for more than a middle-management, Monday-through-Friday, eight-to-five job. A friend and co-worker, who was also looking for a new direction, posed the idea of real estate.

Brian said, “let's do it”, and they both embarked on the real estate journey, though his friend moved out of state and never actually practiced. Brian worked part time for a few years and, as fate would have it, was given a blessing in disguise when his position at the dairy company was eliminated, leaving him with a severance package that provided the funding needed to go full steam ahead into real estate. “I realized I had a talent for this,” Brian recalls. He did indeed have a talent for real estate, earning Top Performer awards at that firm, winning both Tulare County Association of Realtors President's Award in 2016, Realtor of the Year in 2022, and even buying the agency for which he worked.

In 2015, Carlos Aleman and Scott Ellis from The Equity Group approached Brian about merging their firms, which they did on January 1st of the next year. Former presidents themselves, Carlos and Scott encouraged Brian to take on a leadership role at the Tulare County Association of Realtors (TCAOR), which he did. Brian served on many committees, became TCAOR President in 2019 and is currently a traveling director for the California Association of Realtors. Knowing that leadership aligned with his goals, he embraced the opportunity. “It's important





to make decisions that have a positive impact on our industry,” Brian explains.

Now, he is advocating for greater transparency statewide to clear the way for collaboration and cohesiveness as we forge ahead. To best generate a successful plan, Brian believes more top-producing agents must step up and take an active role in shaping the industry’s future by utilizing their influence and experience.

The real estate industry is changing quickly, especially in California, and the uncertainty concerns Brian. With changes looming over the future of Multiple Listing Services, California Association of Realtors, and National Association of Realtors, he acknowledges, “We don’t know what the future holds.” His focus is on ensuring real estate remains a viable industry in the years to come. “I want this industry to survive, and to

accomplish that, realtors need to be the drivers of positive change,” he reiterates, believing firmly in its value to the community.

Brian is deeply committed to his community, particularly to those facing hardships. When he first entered real estate, he sought ways to build connections and give back, which led him to join the Visalia Emergency Aid Council (VEAC). Well over a decade later, he remains actively involved and, in 2024, their annual “Race Against Hunger” raised a record \$300,000 to support its mission. “I’m an advocate for helping families that are trying to make a living and face difficulty making it from Monday to Friday due to the high cost of food and clothing,” he explains. To help bridge that gap, VEAC opened a community supported thrift store, as well as a food pantry. When Brian was president of that organization in 2018-2019, he was honored to be involved with the construction and





“ **I’m an advocate for helping families that are trying to make a living and face difficulty making it from Monday to Friday due to the high cost of food and clothing.”**

grand opening of a brand new 8,500 square foot food pantry that greatly expanded VEAC’s ability to serve the community and now serves thousands of families each year.

In a fun twist of fate, Brian was recently featured on an episode of HGTV’s My Lottery Dream Home with host David Bromstad. One of his longtime friends had won \$10 million on a scratch-off ticket he bought on a whim and turned to Brian for help investing in multiple properties. When the show came calling, there was one catch—typically, lottery winners do not choose their own realtor for the show. But Brian’s friend was adamant, informing producers he would only participate if his realtor were by his side. Filming the show was a memorable experience, and the episode reached an audience of 1.7 million viewers. “We can now have a good laugh and tell everyone we are Reality TV stars,” Brian joked.

Brian has always had a passion for soccer, playing in leagues for as long as he can remember—and he still does today. He met his wife, Michelle, on the soccer field nearly 30 years ago. Michelle’s professional



background is in Organizational Management. She served as District Manager for Calvin Klein for over 20 years, though grew weary of the weekly travel that kept her from her husband, nieces, and nephews, and eventually transitioned into a teaching role near home in Business Fashion at College of the Sequoias. She has since been promoted to Director of Student Success and Giant Dream Center.

At the end of the day, Brian Gilbert’s goal is clear: to improve the real estate industry by fostering collaboration with motivated agents and striving for continuous improvement. He also hopes to extend that spirit of collaboration beyond business, working to make his own community better, together.

Brian Gilbert is a Real Estate Broker at The Equity Group in Visalia, California.



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# Paul Schultheis

## Central Valley's Local Garage Expert®

How Paul's team at Garage Experts can transform a dull, dingy garage into a beautiful extension of your home and living space.

WRITTEN BY ASHLEY KIVISTO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTIAN URENA WITH HOUSEHUB MEDIA

Paul Schultheis was born in the Bay Area of California but moved to Fresno with his family as a child. After high school, Paul relocated to Tahoe to work as a ski instructor, where he met his wife, Shannon. The couple decided to return to Fresno to get married and start their family. Now, 22 years later, they have two children: a 21-year-old daughter who lives in South Carolina with Paul's brother and sister-in-law, and a 14-year-old son who is a freshman at Buchanan High School in Clovis. Paul returned to school to earn his bachelor's degree and later completed the Executive MBA program at Fresno State.

Paul's wife, Shannon, has worked at Westech Systems in Clovis for the past 18 years. Paul is grateful for and credits Shannon's long-standing employment at Westech for giving him the confidence to take more risks in his own business, along with allowing him the flexibility to



raise his family here in Clovis. In 2008, during the housing crisis, Paul was eager to venture into contracting but wasn't sure where he fit in. Having worked for contractors throughout high school and college, he noticed many lacked strong communication skills with both clients and employees, and didn't always treat people well. He knew he could do better. Paul believes that if you do what you say, communicate effectively, and don't shy away from inevitable challenges, you'll earn trust and business within your community. While flipping through Entrepreneur magazine, a feature about Garage Experts caught his attention. "I was sold on the product, I was sold on them," Paul recalls.

Paul has owned the Central Valley franchise of Garage Experts for the past 15 years. During that time, he has earned Franchise of the Year, served as

an official Brand Ambassador, and been recognized as a Diamond Franchise by Garage Experts and is a member of the Garage Experts Franchise Advisory Council. Paul also stays actively involved in his community through his work with the Clovis Chamber of Commerce and the Fresno Chamber.

Garage Experts specializes in Epoxy and Polyaspartic Concrete coating/flooring, and storage solutions including cabinets and other storage products that can be fully tailored to each client's needs. Our own publishers at *Central Valley Real Producers* recently had their garage renovated by Paul's team and are absolutely thrilled with the results. Garage Experts transformed a neglected storage area into an extended living space that includes a golf simulator, gym, robotics workshop, and additional entertainment zones. What







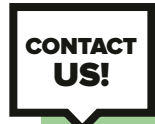
I've done all this by treating people the way they want to be treated, being respectful of their time, and showing up when I say I'm going to show up."



sets Garage Experts apart is that they manufacture all of their own products. "We manufacture everything we install here in the USA. This is really our greatest differentiator," Paul explains. The team visits each property, takes precise measurements, and discusses the customer's preferences. Paul then creates a 3D rendering for approval, with all storage being custom-cut and fitted in-house.

Paul's business has been steadily expanding over the years, and his partnerships with local realtors continue to grow. Many buyers find that while their new homes are beautiful, they often lack sufficient storage. That's where Garage Experts comes in. Having them come in right after closing to customize the garage can be a game-changer. Especially in California, where many people use their garage as their front door, Paul emphasizes how important the space can be. "Your garage can end up being your last touchpoint as you leave your house and the first thing you see when you return home," he explains. Creating a space that makes you happy in those moments can truly impact the overall feel of the entire home. Additionally, when selling a home, a luxury-finished garage can add significant value.

Paul's major success with Garage Experts did not fall into his lap. "I've done all this by treating people the way they want to be treated, being respectful of their time, and showing up when I say I'm going to show up," Paul says. Looking ahead, Paul envisions growth for his business. Currently leading a team of six, he plans to establish an upper management model soon to ensure sustainability, even if he's no longer at the helm. His goal is to support his family, employees, and community for years to come. With the hope of eventually having more time for his personal passions—like golfing, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors with his family—Paul remains focused on maintaining the company's success. Above all, he wants everyone to be a raving fan of his business. "I am very proud of what we do here, and I wear it!" Paul beams.



To see garage transformations and learn more about Paul's services, visit [www.garageexperts.com/fresno](http://www.garageexperts.com/fresno).



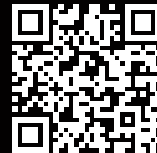
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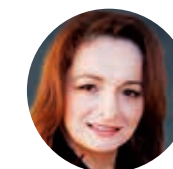
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