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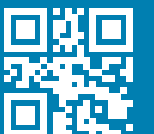
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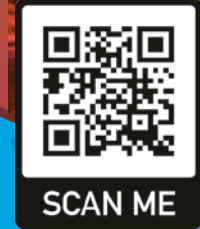
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PUBLISHER’S NOTE

Welcome Spring!

Greetings!

Spring has sprung! This month we are celebrating our cover agent, Vanessa Munoz. Vanessa shares her compelling story about finding your place in the world and helping others along the way. She is truly a stellar agent, reaching the top 1% of agents in PSAR. Christine Menezes is our Rising Star feature and is in the top 10% of agents in only 2 years of being licensed. Her friendly personality and strong work ethic are certainly reasons for her success. Our partner spotlight this month is Jake Schiro, of APX 1031 Exchange. Customer service is top of mind for him and the reason his company is growing at a fast pace. We also enjoyed attending The Women’s Council of Realtors San Diego’s “Polish Your Toolbelt for a Successful 2025” event and PSAR’s REAL Awards, both which are featured in this month “Around Town”.

Cheers!

Cathy Ginder-Publisher
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Fueling Unstoppable Growth:

THE POWER BEHIND YOUR BUSINESS TRAJECTORY

BY MARYAM HABASHI- TRANSFORMATIONAL BUSINESS COACH

Entrepreneurs in sales and leadership roles often face the challenge of balancing growth, consistency, and accountability. The right mentor isn't just a motivator—they are a results-driven partner who helps you create measurable success in your business. Coaching isn't an expense; it's an asset that should generate more revenue, better systems, and higher performance within 90 days—not years.

What Should You See in 90 Days?

With the right mentor and coach, tangible results should be evident within three months. Here's what to expect: Increased Appointments & Sales – A structured approach to prospecting and closing more deals.

- Higher Retention & Stronger Recruiting – Improved leadership strategies that attract and keep top talent.
- Better Communication & Influence – Mastering conversations that drive action, whether with clients or teams.
- Optimized Time Management – More productivity with less overwhelm through proven systems.

- A Clear, Scalable Strategy – Eliminating guesswork and focusing on high-impact activities that drive profit.

What to Look for?

If these outcomes aren't happening, you may have the wrong coach—or none at all. Not all coaches deliver measurable results. Before hiring, ask yourself:

- Does this coach have a proven track record with people in my industry?
- Can they provide actual client success stories and measurable outcomes?
- Do they focus on more than just motivation? Real coaching builds skill, not just enthusiasm.
- Will they challenge me and hold me accountable? Growth happens outside the comfort zone.
- Is their coaching structured with a clear process and benchmarks for success?

A coach should pay for themselves in results—not be another expense that drags on without change.



Maryam Habashi, M.Ed.
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Just like elite athletes work with different coaches for different skills, top entrepreneurs invest in coaching at every level. Whether refining sales strategies, scaling a business, or mastering leadership, a coach keeps you accountable and accelerates your success—saving you time, money, and lost opportunities.

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*“Being part of my clients’
journeys and milestones brings
me immense happiness.”*

PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH IRELAND PHOTOGRAPHY

When did you start your career in real estate?

I began my real estate career in San Diego in 2023.

What did you do before you became a realtor?

Before moving to San Diego in 2022, I lived and worked in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Middle East. While I explored rental real estate there, my primary role was as a Personal Assistant to CEOs in the banking industry.

What are you passionate about right now in your business?

I am deeply passionate about how I can overcome certain pain points my private clients identify, growing my business to the next level, setting new appointments, connecting with fellow agents in the industry, and having a system in place (which I’m still working on).

What has been the most rewarding part of your business?

The most rewarding aspect of my business is the relationships that continue long after the transaction is complete. Being part of my clients’ journeys and milestones brings me immense happiness.

What was your biggest challenge as a realtor?

My biggest challenge was navigating the real estate market in San Diego, having never lived here before 2022. I had to learn everything from scratch, including understanding different counties, norms and ways, adapting to local driving laws, keeping up with evolving real estate contracts to name a few.

What’s your favorite part of being a realtor?

Making new connections, building that trust level and helping clients find their perfect home while making the process as seamless and enjoyable as possible.



“
TO ME, SUCCESS IS
happiness.”



How does Real Estate fit into your dreams and goals?

Real estate provides me with the flexibility and freedom to travel, which is something I plan to do more of in the future.

What are your hobbies and interests outside of Real Estate?

I enjoy reading, walking my dogs, and working out. My husband and I also love mountain biking whenever we get the chance.

Tell us about your family

I have 2 daughters, both born and raised—like me in the Middle East. One currently lives in Tampa, while the other lives with me and is about to start college. My husband, a prior military member, may soon be joining me in the real estate business. We also have a lively household with three wonderful dogs and a cat—so you can imagine the daily excitement!



I TRULY LOVE
SAN DIEGO AND
EVERYTHING THIS
BEAUTIFUL CITY
HAS TO offer.



Are there any charities or organizations that you support?

I serve as the Membership Director for VA Rep San Diego, a national nonprofit headquartered in Washington, D.C. We advocate for homeownership rights within the military and veteran community.

Define success

To me, success is happiness. Despite the inevitable challenges, I find great joy in guiding my clients through one of the most significant decisions of their lives and the smiles and just pure joy on their faces elevates me to a whole new level.

Final Thoughts?

I truly love San Diego and everything this beautiful city has to offer. Thank you for featuring me—it's an honor to be part of this community! Thank you!

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NAR 2024 Year in Review

A NEW ERA BEGINS

SUBMITTED BY REALTOR® MAGAZINE • BY ELIANA BLOCK



The Sitzer-Burnett settlement was a focal point as national, state and local associations worked together to keep members and consumers informed—and association leaders laid the groundwork for the path ahead.

The National Association of REALTORS® released its 2024 Year in Review. The 33-page report is an assessment of the organization’s past year, highlighting member benefits across eight areas—and promising a new mission-driven era.

Last year brought significant milestones for the association, including settlement of the Sitzer-Burnett lawsuit, implementation of residential practice changes for members, and approval of Culture Transformation Commission recommendations to bring greater accountability and transparency. All this came as members worked to navigate a challenging market, with limited inventory, higher interest rates and shifting living and work patterns.

“The past year tested our resilience as an industry, as an association and as individuals,” NAR President Kevin Sears said in a letter that opened the report. “As we embark on 2025, I want to express my gratitude to you—our members, the broker community, the local and state associations, and our MLS and industry partners—for the incredible work you’ve done to push through these challenges and help set the stage for our industry’s future.”

Building Trust, Collaboration
NAR CEO Nykia Wright said the association must evolve to meet the needs of members “today and tomorrow” while building on the momentum generated last year. “In 2024, we cut costs and passed our first balanced budget in at least 10 years,”

Wright said. “We also conducted in-depth research to begin laying the groundwork for a new member experience.”

She added: “The work to redefine our broker relationships; better leverage our relationships with state and local associations to optimize member value; build on our strategic partnerships with aligned Institutes, Societies and Councils; demonstrate our appreciation for the many volunteer leaders who are instrumental to driving our mission forward; and reposition our staff to meet the ever-growing needs of these stakeholder populations will shape our 2025 activities.”

Wright has engaged two new partners in the effort: In early January, NAR announced that Sherry Chris, former CEO of Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate and ERA Real Estate, would join the association as a special advisor to help strengthen relationships, build trust and enhance collaboration with brokerage leaders. On Jan. 15, Jarrod Grasso was named senior vice president of industry relations for NAR, a role dedicated to enhancing the association’s relationship with state and local association leaders. Grasso joins NAR after serving the New Jersey REALTORS® for more than two decades, most recently as their CEO.

Supporting Member Success
In 2024, to assist members in preparing for practice changes outlined in the settlement, NAR launched factsrealtor to provide updates and guidance. The resource includes more than 120 FAQs, a legal video series that garnered more than 800,000 views, and more than a dozen consumer guides, in English and Spanish, for members to use while working with clients. The association also provided its Accredited Buyer’s

Representation (ABR®) designation course at no cost to members; nearly 162,000 REALTORS® took advantage of that benefit.

More than 1,000 NAR members joined a grassroots effort—as surrogates—in 2024 to help educate consumers about the practice changes. Those interested in joining the program can email surrogates@nar.realtor.

In the advocacy arena, NAR scored significant wins: defending private property rights, securing the OK for VA buyers to compensate their brokers directly as the Department of Veterans Affairs studies the issue further, and supporting industry-friendly policies and candidates at all levels of government. The REALTORS® Political Action Committee—which backed 50% Democratic and 50% Republican federal candidates—achieved a 97% success rate in the 2024 election cycle.

Underpinning NAR’s advocacy success is a highly regarded research team that provides thought leadership and produces key housing market data and research reports. In 2024, NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun, Deputy Chief Economist Jessica Lautz and their team spoke at more than 400 in-person and virtual visits across our 1,100-plus local and state associations, brokerages and third-party organizations. NAR’s research content generated 1.9 million website visits, 240,000 report downloads and 100,000 social shares in 2024, signifying the appetite members and consumers have for reliable housing data and research reports.

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BY JOSEPH COTTLE • PHOTOS BY BRANDON PEASE- LINKED PREVIEW, LLC

JAKE SCHIRO

APX 1031 EXCHANGE

Boomers are retiring at an ever-increasing clip, and they're looking to cash out their real estate investments. Jake Schiro explains the statistics—"According to Forbes "they are a demographic group 73 million people strong...Since 2010, about 10,000 of them have turned 65 per day, and they all will cross that age threshold by 2030.

Jake is the CEO of APX 1031, and those retiring boomers are his bread and butter.

He explains, "A lot of them are getting tired of being a landlord, especially here in California where the government keeps making tenant laws more and more advantageous to the tenants as opposed to the investors that own the properties. They've made it increasingly difficult to operate a business as a real estate investor. And so, we help landlords retire by helping them exchange into passive real estate options that get them 'mailbox money.'"

Simply put, he wants to help people retire well. "Not having to worry about being a landlord puts more time back in your day so that you can focus on the things that matter and the things that you want to do and care about. Our clients want to spend time with their grandkids, so putting more time back in their day is important to us," Jake says. Business is growing for Jake and his team, so much so that he intends to start

acquiring other boutique 1031 exchange firms and bring them under the APX 1031 banner. He attributes the accelerated growth of his business to the Delaware Statutory Trust (DST for short), "Which is a completely passive investment where you're a fractional owner of a much larger property," Jake explains. "It could be a 500-unit apartment building in Austin, Texas, with all the amenities or something similar. This





vehicle allows investors to buy into something where they don't then have to worry about getting a call about a leaky toilet in the middle of the night."

The firm prioritizes exceptional customer service. "We are very, very attentive to all of our clients," Jake says, "treating each one as if they're our *only* client. We make sure that we get back to people quickly, and we simplify the exchange process for realtors and investors. That's the bedrock foundation of our business that created our slogan:

simplify your exchange, simplify your life."

Jake is adamant about his firm's service; it's something he takes personally. "We're talking about people's hard-earned money and portfolios they spent their lifetime building," he says, "so we take it seriously because we understand that's a big deal."

Jake wants to give people financial freedom that allows them to live their lives, and that freedom is what he brings to the clients of APX 1031. He and his team work every day to make sure his

clients' hard work is well-rewarded, and that matters to them. "People leave us raving reviews," Jake says. "Most of them are people that have maybe one or two

other reviews, so it's not just some local guides who are always posting reviews. It's people that go out of their way to tell their story."

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Vanessa Munoz

A Passion for Real Estate & Clients

BY DAVID CORNWELL
PHOTOS BY CALDER PEARCE -
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Realtor Vanessa Munoz is a champion when it comes to rescuing families trapped by endless cycles of poverty. It's a subject she knows a little something about.

"My childhood was, let's say, difficult," says the top producer at BLVDS Realty and one of San Diego's top Realtors.

Born in Indio, CA, and moving with her family to San Diego when she was young, Vanessa says her family, like many, seemed to face an endless stream of circumstances that held it down.

Being the second oldest of five children, the duties to raise her siblings fell on Vanessa, a heavy responsibility that meant she had to grow up fast, she says. Her family's circumstances made her determined she would break the cycle of poverty and despair that kept them trapped.

Becoming a realtor when she was 25 helped her do just that. Now in the top 1 percent of San Diego Realtors, she's helped scores of homebuyers avoid similar traps as well as start building generational wealth of their own.

Vanessa also focuses on "not letting my past affect my present," an important lesson for anyone to learn, she says.

"And I always want to be there for my daughters, providing for them what I wasn't provided as a child."

Attending San Diego's Hoover High, Vanessa earned high grades and honors in high school and was awarded a college scholarship.

"But I chose love over college," she says, not wanting to split from her high school sweetheart, the two having met at a Christian youth group.

"Even though I didn't go to college, my life choices still led me to where I am

today and I couldn't be happier," she says. "Then, too, you can't really live life without regrets."

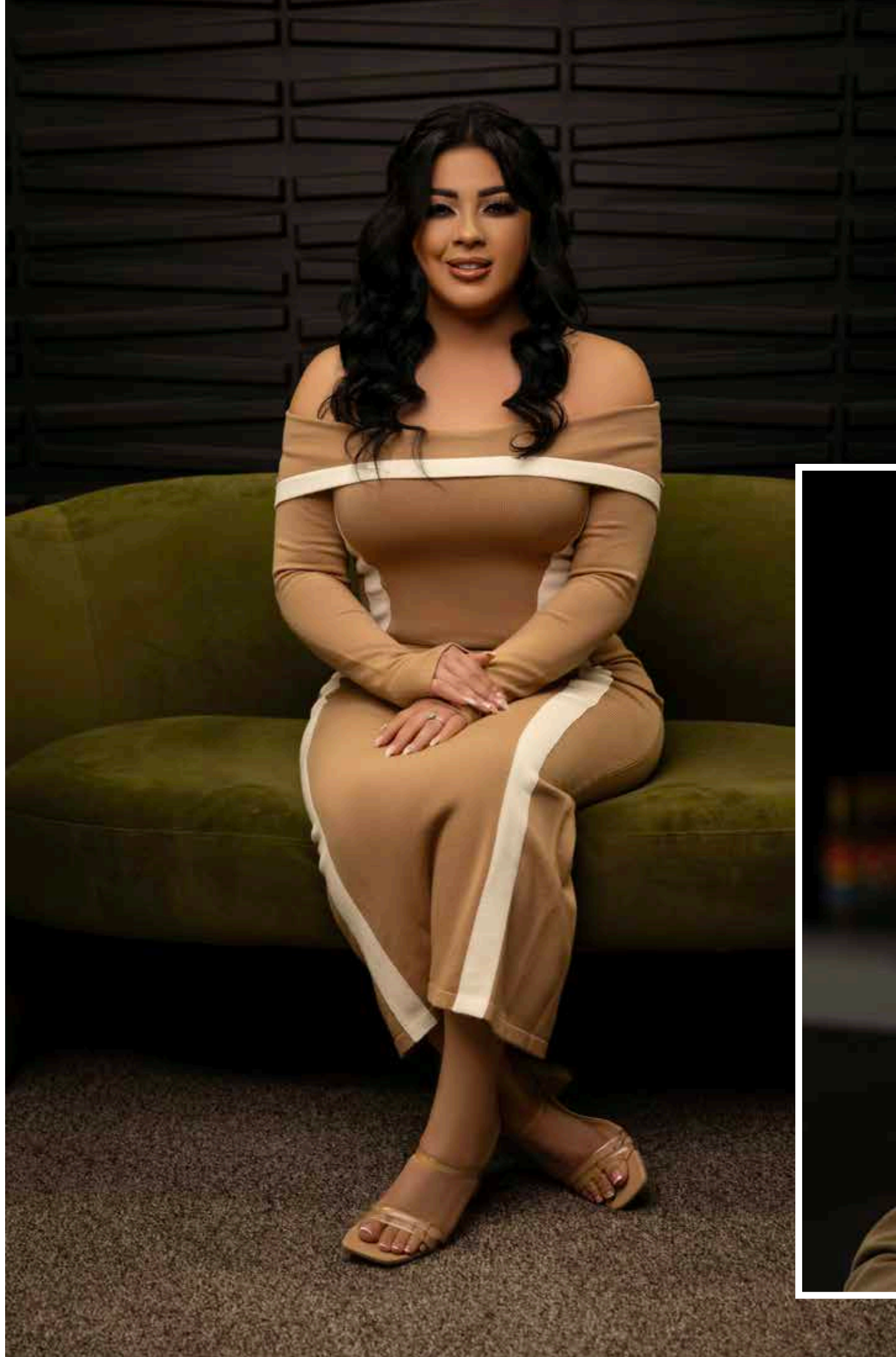
Away from work, she and her husband are kept busy shuttling their daughters to and from flag football, gymnastics and other activities and events. "And we love taking them on trips and helping them discover new experiences."

Vanessa feels fortunate that real estate has given her a career with the independence needed to also be an involved mother. And it helps that her husband is always there to help when she's overloaded.

It's not uncommon to come home in the evening to find him folding clothes, she says. "He's a real sweetie."

The couple enjoys walking together with the household's two other family members, Duke, their German Shepherd and Sasha, their Husky.





Passionate about her profession, Vanessa is active in making it even better through membership on the board of NAHREP (National Association of Real Estate Professionals).

She also feels strongly that by working with families to buy a home or avoid foreclosure, she's making her community stronger.

She recalls a few years back when many area homeowners began receiving notice of defaults.

"I helped more than 100 families save their homes from foreclosure during the period," she says. "I would try every option humanly possible to stop those foreclosures from happening, and if nothing worked, I would help them sell their home. Let's just say I helped a lot more people than sold their homes."

Asked what she finds most fulfilling about her job, she says it is "the ability to help others realize their own dream of home ownership, break out of their own cycles and build generational wealth."

“

I WANT TO INSPIRE PEOPLE AND LET THEM KNOW THEY CAN DO ANYTHING THEY SET THEIR MIND TO, REGARDLESS OF THEIR PAST.”



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PHOTOS BY AMANDA RENZI





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