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PROFILES



28 Coaching Corner

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Kelsey Hawes

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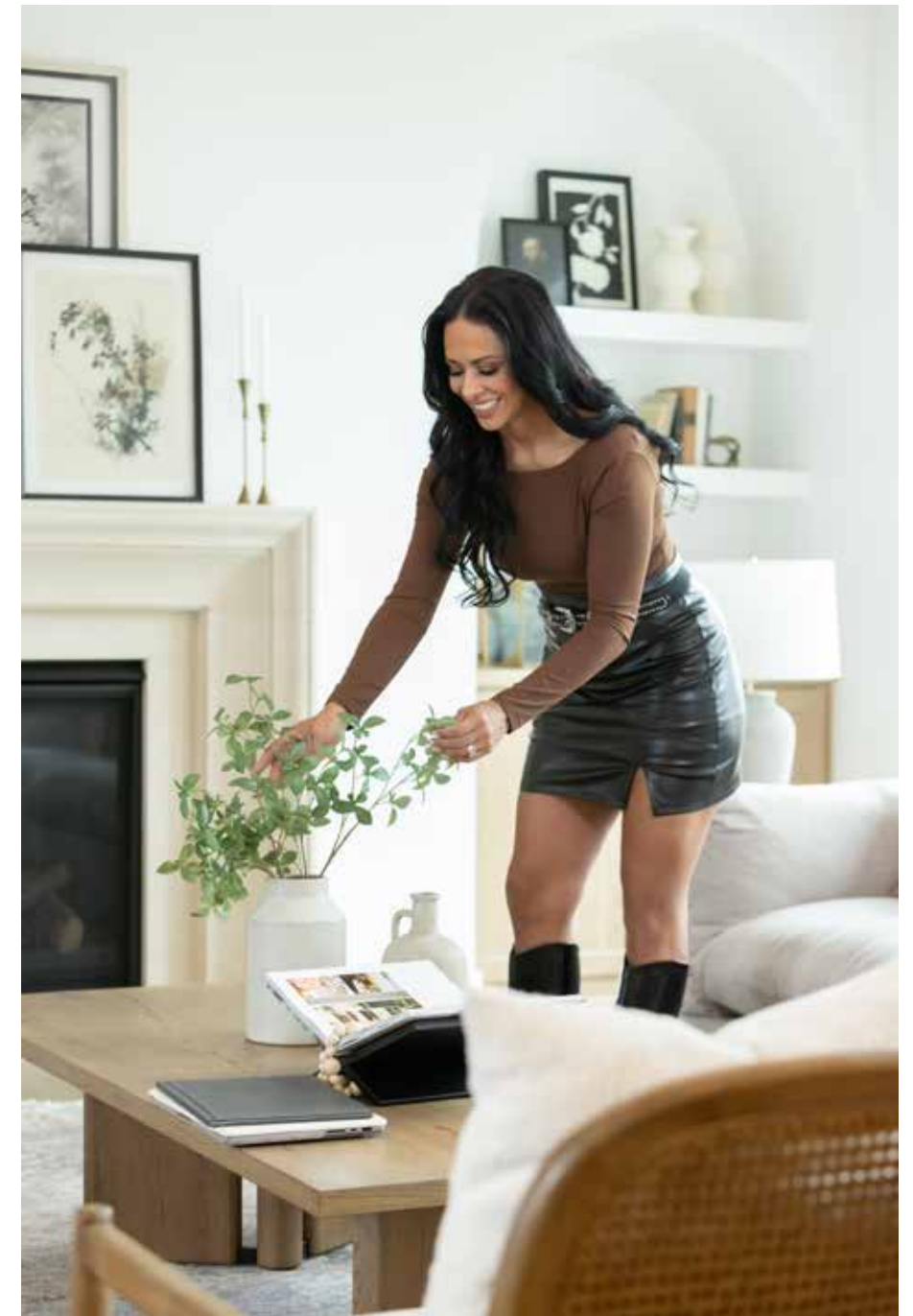
How Carol's Journey from Brazil to Real Estate Entrepreneur is Defined by Client Care, Strategy, & Family Values

BY JOSEPH COTTLE
PHOTOS BY TIFFANY MATSON

It's one thing to dive into real estate in the place where you grew up; it's a whole different thing to move across the world to a new country and build something truly from scratch. Carol Rossi-Zabielski did just that, though, and she's looking to do even more.

Everything for Carol started in Brazil, her home country, where her father is a real estate developer. "I grew up surrounded by real estate," Carol recalls. "But like many young people, I wanted to carve my own path. My parents always instilled in me the spirit of entrepreneurship and the importance of higher education." So, at just seventeen years old, Carol moved to the United States to pursue her bachelor's degree and immerse herself in American culture, initially planning to stay for only a year. "I came here to learn English and go to college, but I ended up staying longer and falling in love with the opportunities here," she says.

After obtaining an International Business and Marketing degree, Carol worked in various roles, from internships to financial controller positions, but it was a difficult experience selling her own home that changed her life's direction. "I had a tough experience with an agent trying to sell my house, and I thought, 'I've always wanted to sell real estate anyway, perhaps now is the perfect time,'" Carol shares. She took the leap, got her real estate license, and never looked back. "I strategically remodeled, staged, and sold my first property—my own home—for \$30,000 more than the previous agent listed it for, and I was hooked,"



she recalls with pride. "That was my moment of realization that real estate was where I needed to be."

Now Carol leads her own team, the RZ Team, with five agents and two administrative staff. She has consistently grown her business year after year, making it to the top 1% lists all across the KC market. Besides that marked success, Carol is a real estate investor herself, flipping and holding properties all while owning a real estate firm in Brazil alongside several development

projects with her family abroad. She is a true international real estate superstar!

Carol's dedication to her clients is rooted in her desire to empower them, whether they are buying their first home or looking to make an investment. "I want my clients to feel confident in their decisions," she says. "Real estate is more than just a transaction for me. It's about helping people build their futures." She works primarily by referral, believing that lasting relationships with her clients are key. "I want to connect with the people I work with on a deeper level.

**“I WANT TO
SHOW OTHER
WOMEN THAT
YOU CAN HAVE
A SUCCESSFUL
CAREER IN REAL
ESTATE AND STILL
BE PRESENT FOR
YOUR FAMILY.”**



It's not just about the commission for me—it's about their success and making a difference in people's lives," Carol explains. Her business is largely built on the trust and referrals from those who appreciate her genuine care and commitment.

Carol's background in business and finance is a huge asset to her real estate career. "Having a solid financial foundation has helped me understand the numbers side of real estate and guide my clients on their real estate investments. But more importantly to me, real estate is about connecting with people," she says. Her ability to guide clients through financial decisions while also being empathetic to their personal needs is a driving factor in her success. "Whether it's working with small business owners or investors, I make sure I understand what's at stake for them, and I help them make the best decision possible," Carol says.

Family and personal connections are central to Carol's life. She met her husband (Matt) while earning her MBA in Kansas City, and they have two sons, aged 14 and 8, who keep her busy with their extracurricular activities. "I love spending time with my family, especially outdoors and traveling the world," Carol shares. They enjoy camping, hiking, skiing, and traveling together. "We've been to places like Montana and Florida for camping trips. We love traveling to different countries, immersing ourselves in different cultures, and we love the beach. Being outdoors is so important to us," she says. Despite her busy career, Carol prioritizes her family, often adjusting her schedule to attend her kids' sports games and events. "I want to show other women that you can have a successful career in real estate and still be present for your family," she says.


Carol is involved with multiple different charitable organizations, and she loves to give back to the local community. She makes a contribution towards a local organization at each closing and is very passionate about giving. "It's true what they say: it's blessed to be the one who gives. There is no better fulfillment to me than helping others," Carol says. Carol's experience as a real

estate professional is about more than just closing deals—it's about creating opportunities, building relationships, and making a lasting impact on the lives of her clients. Her career may have begun with the financial and strategic knowledge gained from her MBA and controller roles, but it's her passion for real estate, her caring approach, and her commitment to putting her clients first that truly defines her success.

Whether it's guiding a first-time buyer or helping an investor navigate the complexities of the market, Carol Rossi-Zabielski brings a unique blend of professionalism, personal care, and genuine enthusiasm to every step of the real estate process. "This is my passion, and it's not just about the deal," she says. "It's about helping people achieve their goals and dreams."









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Kelsey Hawes

Building a Real Estate Career with Purpose

How a leap of faith turned into a thriving business

BY JOSEPH COTTLE • PHOTOS BY TIFFANY MATSON

At just 21 years old, Kelsey stepped into the world of real estate as a transaction coordinator, stager, and assistant. At the time, she was still in college, going to school for interior design with no real estate background and no family connections in the industry. What she did have, though, was a drive to learn.

“I didn’t know much about real estate, but I knew I wanted to be a part of it,” Kelsey says. “So I called a local real estate agent and basically pitched myself for any job they had. I was willing to do whatever it took to get my foot in the door.”

That decision changed everything. For the next few years during the hot post-COVID market, Kelsey immersed herself in the business. She handled contracts, coordinated transactions, staged homes, and learned firsthand what made agents successful. By the time she was ready to get her license at 23 years old, she stood on a foundation most new agents could only hope for.

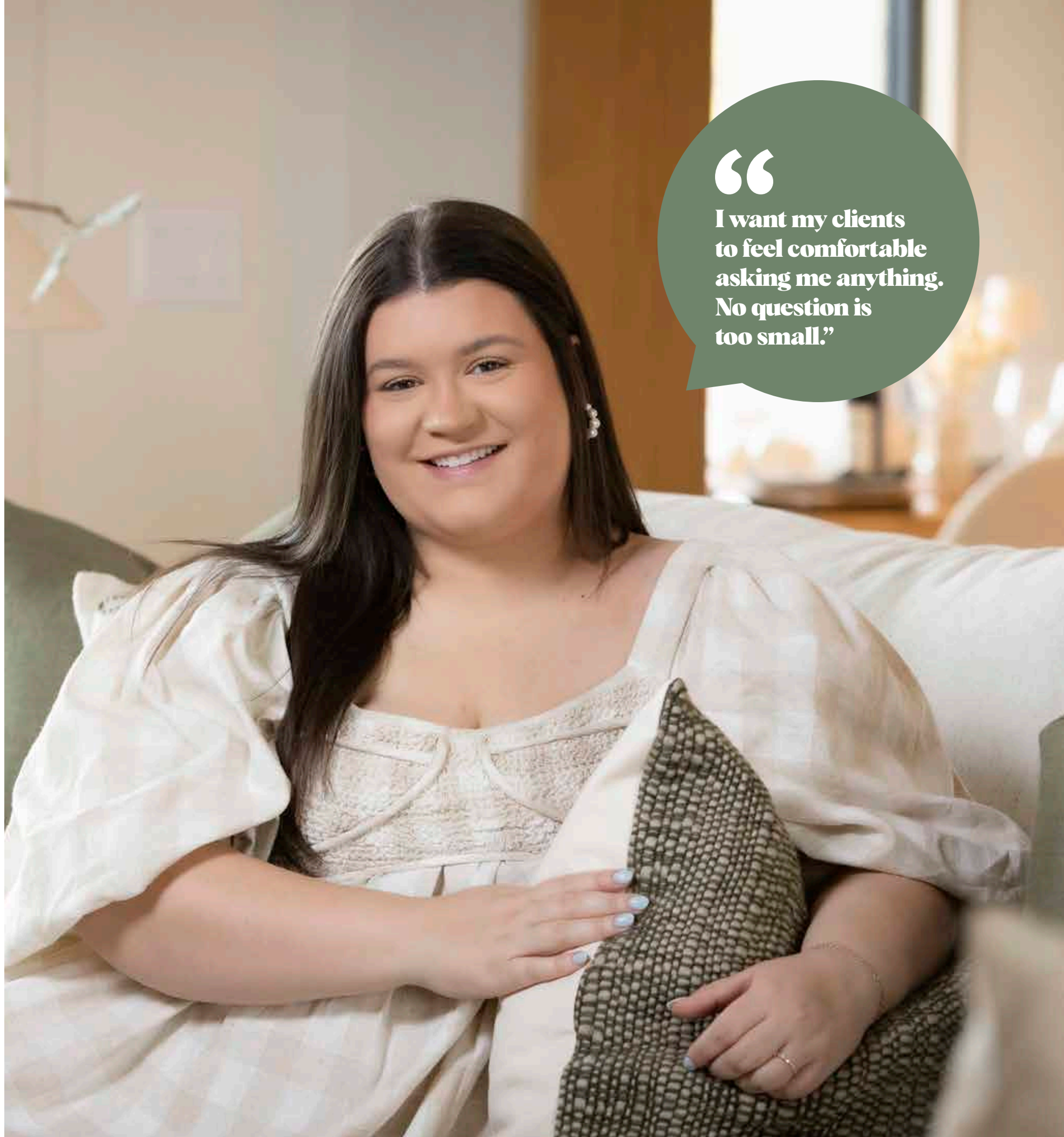
“I had spent years watching top agents work behind the scenes,” Kelsey says. “I knew the fundamentals inside and out, and I had seen what strategies actually worked. So when I finally jumped in, I felt ready.”

She took a leap of faith and went all in—there was no backup plan. “I had no choice but to make it work,” she says.

It worked. In her first six months, Kelsey’s total sales topped \$1 million. By the next year, that number jumped to \$5 million. She credits much of that success to the help of her husband who supported the family financially while she found her footing. He helped her stage homes, get all her listings ready to go on the market and made the flexible real estate schedule work for their family.

“

I want my clients to feel comfortable asking me anything. No question is too small.”



The rest of Kelsey’s quick success comes from her ability to connect with people. She knows that for most buyers and sellers, real estate can feel overwhelming. Her goal is to make sure they always feel supported.

“When you don’t know something—whether it’s buying a house or anything else in life—it can be intimidating,” she says. “I want my clients to feel comfortable asking me anything. No question is too small.”

That level of trust has helped her build a strong referral network alongside being a homegrown real estate agent, working where she grew up in Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties. Many of her clients are people she has known for years. “It’s rewarding when people you’ve known your whole life trust you with something as big as buying or selling a home,” she says. “I take that responsibility seriously.”

Kelsey credits smart marketing strategies have also played a major role in growing her business. She joined Carol Rossi-Zabielski’s team, a move that introduced her to a hands-on, relationship-driven marketing style. “We do a lot of in-person events, which I think sets us apart,” Kelsey says. “We want to be in front of our clients, not just on their screens. Whether it’s an event or a simple mailer, we make sure they’re always seeing our name.”

Social media has also been a powerful tool, as well. “In my first year, a lot of my business came from social media,” she says. “People saw what I was doing behind the scenes and reached out when they were ready to buy or sell. It’s about staying visible and showing people what you can do.”

Kelsey’s goal for the next few years is simple: keep growing. “I always want to do better than the year before,” she says. “Not just in sales; I want to help as many people as I can.”

That growth shouldn’t be tough. She just landed her first new construction neighborhood, a development taking shape in Basehor. “Representing a neighborhood has been a dream of mine since day one,” she says. “Growing up, my parents bought new construction homes, and I always loved visiting the model homes and meeting the agents. Now, I get to be that person.”

When she’s not working, Kelsey spends time with her husband and two golden retrievers, and she especially loves heading to Chief’s games with friends and family. And big changes are on the horizon—she and her husband are expecting their first baby in August. “It’s an exciting time,” she says. “Balancing work and preparing for a baby is a lot, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

With her dedication, community ties, and passion for helping people, Kelsey Hawes isn’t just building a real estate career—she’s building a legacy.



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DON'T LET THE DOOR HIT YOU...

SUBMITTED BY CHRISTY BELT GROSSMAN, CEO AND OWNER OF OPS BOSS COACHING™

Employee turnover is a reality for every business, and real estate teams are no exception. Whether an agent or an operations team member is leaving for a new opportunity, a career change, or personal reasons, how you handle their departure can impact your business, your culture, and even your reputation.

It's easy to take a "Don't let the door hit you on the way out" attitude, especially when an employee's or agent's departure creates stress. But a more strategic approach is to see it as a learning opportunity.

Why Do An Exit Interview?

Conducting an exit interview allows you to:

- Gain valuable feedback for improvement
- Affirm what's working well in your organization
- Maintain a professional, positive relationship with the departing agent or employee
- Align on messaging about their departure

Without feedback, growth is impossible. A well-executed exit interview provides insight into what's working—and what needs to change—so you can continue to build a stronger, more effective team. So what do you ask?

Exit Questions For Both Agents and Operations Employees

- What prompted you to begin searching for another opportunity?
- Why did you choose the opportunity you chose versus another position here or elsewhere?
- What are you most looking forward to in your new situation?
- What did you like best and least about your role here?
- Did you feel you had the support, tools, and resources you needed to be successful in your role (systems, team

collaboration, etc.)? If not, which areas could be improved?

- Did you feel your achievements were recognized?
- How did you feel about the communication and collaboration within the team?
- Do you have any feedback you'd like me to share with the Team Owner?
- What suggestions do you have for the team to improve processes or operations?
- Would you recommend this team to a friend or colleague? Why or why not?
- How would you describe what it's like to work with our team?
- What 3 words would you use to describe our team culture?
- Is there anything else you'd like to add or any final thoughts you'd like to share?

Exit Questions For Real Estate Agents (Commission-Based)

- How did you feel about commission splits and compensation structures?
- Did you feel you received enough leads or support in building your pipeline?
- How did you feel about the level of autonomy you had in your role and the ability to manage your business?
- Were you satisfied with the marketing, touch plan, events, transaction and operational support you received? How could we improve the tools or systems provided to help you succeed?
- How did you feel about the team's approach to client management and

support during transactions? Could this be improved?

- Is there anything about the lead distribution or commission structure that you think could be improved?
- How did you feel about the coaching & training provided by the team? Did it help you grow in your role as an agent?

Exit Questions For Operations Employees

- Did you feel your salary and bonus structure were competitive and reflective of your contributions? Was there anything about the compensation package that could be improved?
- Did you feel supported with the tools and resources you needed to perform your role efficiently?



Pro Tip

Your Independent Contractor Agreement for Agents should clearly outline how you "get out of business" together. (Make sure you run it by your attorney!) If you wait until a departure happens to decide who keeps what leads, referral fees, access to CRM, etc; it turns into a negotiation. Negotiating under stress and oftentimes when trust has been broken is not the ideal time to handle this. Everything should be handled upfront when entering into business together to ensure a smooth transition when someone leaves.



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- Was your workload manageable? Is there anything you would change?
- Was there clarity around expectations for your role? Were you clear on how success in your role was measured?
- Was your work-life balance was supported by the company's culture and structure?
- How did you find the team's approach to feedback and recognition? Did you feel your work was appropriately acknowledged?

Turning Feedback into Action

Sometimes we fall short in hiring. Sometimes we struggle in leadership. Sometimes employees or agents underperform. And sometimes, life simply happens. But at the end of the day, failure is just feedback.

An Exit Interview offers insights into what's working and what's not. It presents an opportunity to refine processes, double down on what's effective, and correct what needs improvement.

Cheers to leveling up! THAT is bossy!



Ops Boss® Coaching was founded by Christy Belt Grossman, former COO of one of the nation's

first \$1 Billion sales teams. Ops Boss® Coaching is the premier provider of education, coaching, and community for real estate operations professionals—who we call Ops Bosses®! Learn more at www.OpsBossCoaching.com.

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TOP 200 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Apr. 30, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
1	Rob Ellerman	Team	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
2	Koehler	Bortnick Team	Reecenichols - Leawood
3	Spradling	Group	Exp Realty LLC
4	Eric Craig	Team	Reecenichols-Kcn
5	Dan	Lynch	Lynch Real Estate
6	Bryan	Huff	Keller Williams Realty Partner
7	Ray Homes Kc	Team	Compass Realty Group
8	Thrive Real Estate K	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
9	The Collective	Team	Compass Realty Group
10	Ask Cathy	Team	Keller Williams Platinum Prtnr
11	Dani Beyer	Team	Keller Williams Kc North
12	Tamra	Trickey	Reecenichols - Leawood
13	BG	& Associates	Bg & Associates LLC
14	Benjamin	Lytle	Opendoor Brokerage LLC
15	Kristin	Malfer	Compass Realty Group
16	Richey Real Estate	Group	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
17	The Small	Team	Reecenichols-Kcn

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#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
18	Reesemontgomery	Team	Aristocrat Realty
19	Brooke	Miller	Reecenichols - Country Club Plaza
20	Danielle	Sapienza	Reecenichols- Leawood Town Center
21	Wade	Fitzmaurice	Fitz Osborn Real Estate LLC
22	Marti	Prieb Lilja	Keller Williams Realty Partner
23	Macoubrie	Zimmerman	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
24	Michelle	Lutz	Lutz Sales + Investments
25	Kim	Brown	Lynch Real Estate
26	Hern	Group	Keller Williams Platinum Prtnr
27	Shannon	Brimacombe	Compass Realty Group
28	Cjco	Team	Reecenichols - Leawood
29	Moore	Homes Team	Compass Realty Group
30	John	Barth	RE/MAX Innovations
31	Shelly	Balthazor	Reecenichols- Leawood Town Center
32	Nelson	Group	Keller Williams Kc North
33	Aaron	Donner	Keller Williams Realty Partner
34	Darren	Merlin	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
35	Steve	Cutshaw	Keller Williams Realty Partner
36	Lynne	Matile	Reecenichols - Overland Park
37	Doug	Adam	Loch Lloyd Residential Re
38	Hcr	Team	RE/MAX Elite, Realtors
39	Blake Nelson	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
40	Sharp Homes	Team	Epique Realty
41	Lauren	Anderson	Reecenichols -The Village
42	Sbd	Team	Sbd Housing Solutions LLC
43	Lauren	Engle	Platinum Realty LLC
44	Teresa	Acklin	Prime Development Land Co LLC
45	Stroud & Associates	Team	Real Broker, LLC
46	Lux	Network	KW Kansas City Metro
47	Austin Home	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
48	Dennis	Prussman	Real Broker, LLC-Mo
49	Dan	O'Dell	Real Broker, LLC
50	Ken Hoover	Group	Keller Williams Kc North

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
51	Malina	Group	Keller Williams Realty Partner
52	Ken	Rosberg	Prime Development Land Co LLC
53	Austin Short	Group	KW Kansas City Metro
54	Billie	Bauer Network	KW Realty Partners
55	Brent	Sledd	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
56	Jeremy	Applebaum	Real Broker, LLC
57	Linda	Mcclung	Compass Realty Group
58	Lindsay	Sierens Schulze	Reecenichols - Leawood
59	Ashley	Kendrick	Chartwell Realty LLC
60	Lindsey	Pryor	Compass Realty Group
61	Moving to KC	Team	KW Kansas City Metro
62	Wardell	& Holmes	Wardell & Holmes Real Estate
63	Sally	Moore	Keller Williams Platinum Prtnr
64	David	Van Noy Jr.	Van Noy Real Estate
65	Krishna	Chinnam	Keller Williams Realty Partner
66	Aravind	Pentapati	Platinum Realty LLC
67	Alex	Thome	Reecenichols - Leawood

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Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Apr. 30, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
101	Peter	Colpitts	Reecenichols- Leawood Town Center
102	Jennifer	Barth	RE/MAX Realty And Auction House LLC
103	Loughlin & Associate	Team	Keller Williams Kc North
104	The Fussell	Group	KW Kansas City Metro
105	Jason	Rains	RE/MAX Elite, Realtors
106	Crystal	Metcalfe	United Real Estate Kansas City
107	Steve	Ashner	Reecenichols Wilshire
108	Joseph	Ledford	Platinum Realty LLC
109	Ripley Assoc	Team	Engel & Volkers Kansas City
110	Terry Madden	Myers	Compass Realty Group
111	Rebekah	Schaaf	Reecenichols - Overland Park
112	Jake	Zillner	Modern Realty Advisors
113	Will	Wiest	Midwest Land Group
114	Magnolia Kc	Group	Compass Realty Group
115	Sara	Bash Reda	Compass Realty Group
116	Chris	Austin	KW Kansas City Metro
117	Jayne	Fincher	Reecenichols - Leawood

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Teams and Individuals Closed from Jan. 1, 2025 - Apr. 30, 2025

#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
151	Chuck	Zuvers	Zuvers Real Estate Services
152	Bill	Gerue	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
153	Greg	Bemboom	Sage Sotheby's International Realty
154	Tradition	Home Group	Compass Realty Group
155	Jessica	Smotherman	RE/MAX Elite, Realtors
156	Bailey	Lyons	Lyons Realty Group
157	Jeannine	Webb	Platinum Realty LLC
158	David	Gundersen	RE/MAX Realty Suburban Inc
159	Danette	Baker	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
160	Madison	Moss (Harpst)	RE/MAX Innovations
161	Maddie	Howard	Platinum Realty LLC
162	Kaleena	Schumacher	Keller Williams Realty Partner
163	Cathryn	Byrom	KW Kansas City Metro
164	David	Barraza	Real Broker, LLC
165	Austin	Short	KW Kansas City Metro
166	Nancy Kirk	Matthew	Compass Realty Group
167	Kevin	Foster	Reecenichols - Eastland

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#	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	OFFICE NAME
168	Brandon	Edlin	Keller Williams Kc North
169	Nick	Gadwood	Nexthome Gadwood Group
170	Becca	Hageman	Compass Realty Group
171	Tara	Myers	Coldwell Banker Distinctive Pr
172	Mike	O Dell	Real Broker, LLC
173	Gina	Dennis	Reecenichols - Leawood
174	Sarah	Page	Compass Realty Group
175	Sundance	Team	Rodrock & Associates Realtors
176	Suzanne	Golomski	Reecenichols - Leawood
177	Bridget	Brown-Kiggins	Weichert, Realtors Welch & Com
178	Locate	Team	Compass Realty Group
179	Patty	Simpson	Crown Realty
180	Lisa	Nelson	Reecenichols - Leawood
181	Shelia	Hampton	Reecenichols - Granada
182	Quinn	Whimley	Reilly Real Estate LLC
183	Candi	Sweeney	Reecenichols - Parkville
184	Mendy	Jarman	Keller Williams Realty Partner
185	Christina	Brown	Sage Door Realty, LLC
186	Stephanie	Brown	Reecenichols-Kcn
187	Ben	Jacks	Midwest Land Group
188	Jack	Allen	Bhg Kansas City Homes
189	Pete	Singh	Platinum Realty LLC
190	Lori	Robben	Platinum Realty LLC
191	Audrie	King	Platinum Realty LLC
192	Linda	Clemons	RE/MAX Innovations
193	Jared	Smith	Inspired Realty Of Kc, LLC
194	Mike	Russell	Real Broker, LLC
195	Nicole	Westhoff	Reecenichols - Lees Summit
196	Jackie	Perez	Inspired Realty Of Kc, LLC
197	Leslie	Rainey	RE/MAX Innovations
198	Joe	Woods	Real Broker, LLC
199	Jamie	Burks	Redfin Corporation
200	Rachel	Kilmer	Reecenichols - Lees Summit

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FAQ about Kansas City Real Producers

Ever since we launched *Kansas City Real Producers* in July 2017, I have heard some of the same questions from many of you. I figured it would be most efficient to publish the answers here in case more of you had the same questions. Remember, my door is **always** open to discuss anything regarding this community — this publication is 100% designed to be **your** voice!

Q: Who receives this magazine?

A: The top 500 agents of Kansas City. We pulled MLS numbers (by closed volume) in the Kansas City market. We cut off the list at number 500. The list will reset in early 2025 based on 2024 totals and continues to update annually.

Q: Why am I not listed on the top 200 standings/ why are my numbers showing differently?

A: There are a number of reasons why that could be the case. First, be sure to read the disclaimer in its entirety. We pull the data on the exact date listed, so if the closed transaction is not submitted by that date, it will not be included. User error or BRIGHT error is always a possibility. The most common reason is that for any deal with an alternate agent listed, the production gets divided in half between the lead agent and the alternate. There are a few other factors at play, so if you have a question about the Standings, please contact me, and we can take a look: reece.hale@realproducersmag.com.

Q: What is the process for being featured in this magazine?

A: It's really simple — one or multiple peers have first nominated every featured agent you see. You can nominate or be nominated by other agents, affiliates, brokers, owners, and office leaders. A nomination currently looks like this: you email us at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com with the subject "Nomination: (Name of Nominee)." Please explain WHY you are nominating them to be featured. It could be that they have an amazing story that needs to be told, perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way, etc. Once the timing is right, the next step is an interview with us to ensure it's a good fit. If all works out, then we put the wheels in motion.

Q: What does it cost to be featured?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing, my friends, so nominate away! This is NOT a pay-to-play model whatsoever.

Q: How can I write an article to be printed?

A: If you are interested in writing an article to contribute your ideas, experience, knowledge, expertise, or stories to the *Kansas City Real Producers* community, please email me at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com. Even if you don't consider yourself a prolific writer, let's talk!

Q: Who are the Preferred Partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "Preferred Partner" in the index at the front of the magazine is an integral part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our events, and be part of our Facebook group. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many agents have personally referred every single Preferred Partner you see. We won't even take a meeting with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and is "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network not only of the best agents in the area but the best affiliates, as well, so we can all grow stronger together.

Q: How can I refer a local business to join KCRP as a Preferred Partner?

A: If you know and want to recommend a local business that would like to work with more top real estate agents, please email me at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com and introduce us! This is the only way we can grow and strengthen this community, through your referrals. It's much appreciated!

Q: How might I get more involved in this community?

A: Two primary ways: First of all, if you have not already, be sure to join our private Facebook group specifically for the top 500 real estate agents and our preferred partners. To request to join, simply search on Facebook the keywords "Kansas City's Top 500 Real Producers Community," and it will pop right up. Request to join, and we will promptly accept you into the group. This online community is a space for further connection, contribution, and curiosity to be shared among our members. Secondly, be sure to attend our events. We currently plan to host events throughout the year, a couple of golf outings, and some VIP social events throughout 2025. We promote these events via email and Facebook, so if you haven't been receiving invites, please email me immediately at reece.hale@realproducersmag.com.



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