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Builder Expo Recap

Shaping the Future of Our Market



Rising Star
MAGGIE LIN

Business Strategy
**THE INVISIBLE COST
OF BEING BUSY**

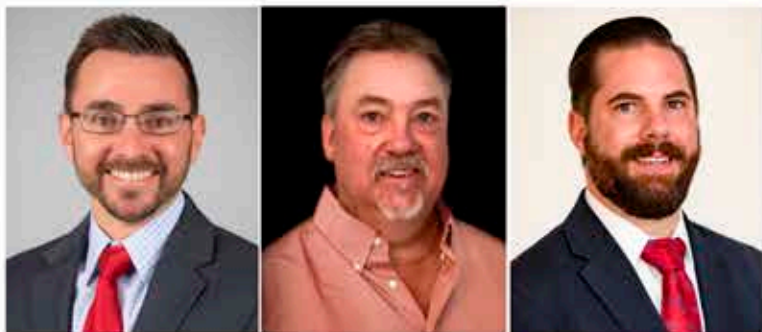
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Raising the Standard

WHY EXCELLENCE IS NOT A DESTINATION— BUT A DISCIPLINE

BY GABRIEL CHANDLER

In a competitive industry, good is common.

What separates the professionals who lead the market from those who simply participate is not access, opportunity, or tools—it’s standards.

The agents operating at the highest level didn’t arrive there by chance. They stayed committed when conditions shifted. They adapted when the market demanded more. And they consistently placed themselves around people who sharpened their thinking and elevated their expectations.

At Real Producers, that commitment to excellence is foundational.

What Truly Separates High Performers

Every agent has access to the same resources—technology, data, marketing channels, and platforms. The difference isn’t availability. It’s application.

Top performers don’t simply stay busy. They execute with intention. They build relationships with depth. They lead through consistency, not convenience. They don’t chase trends—they set tone. They don’t aim to keep up—they aim to raise the bar.



That’s why this platform exists: to highlight excellence, facilitate meaningful connection, and create environments where high standards are reinforced—not diluted.

Excellence Requires Intention
Growth doesn’t happen passively.

- It begins with honest reflection:
- Who is influencing your thinking?
- Where are you showing up consistently?
- What standards are you reinforcing through your daily habits?

The difference between strong and exceptional often comes down to the willingness to refine, recalibrate, and recommit—especially when momentum is already present.

If you’re reading this, it’s likely because you expect more—from yourself, your business, and the people around you.

The Rooms That Shape Results

The most meaningful shifts in a career rarely happen alone. They happen through conversation, proximity, and presence.

Whether it’s a Real Producers event, a panel discussion, or a simple exchange with a trusted peer, growth accelerates when you step into the right rooms and stay engaged in the right conversations.

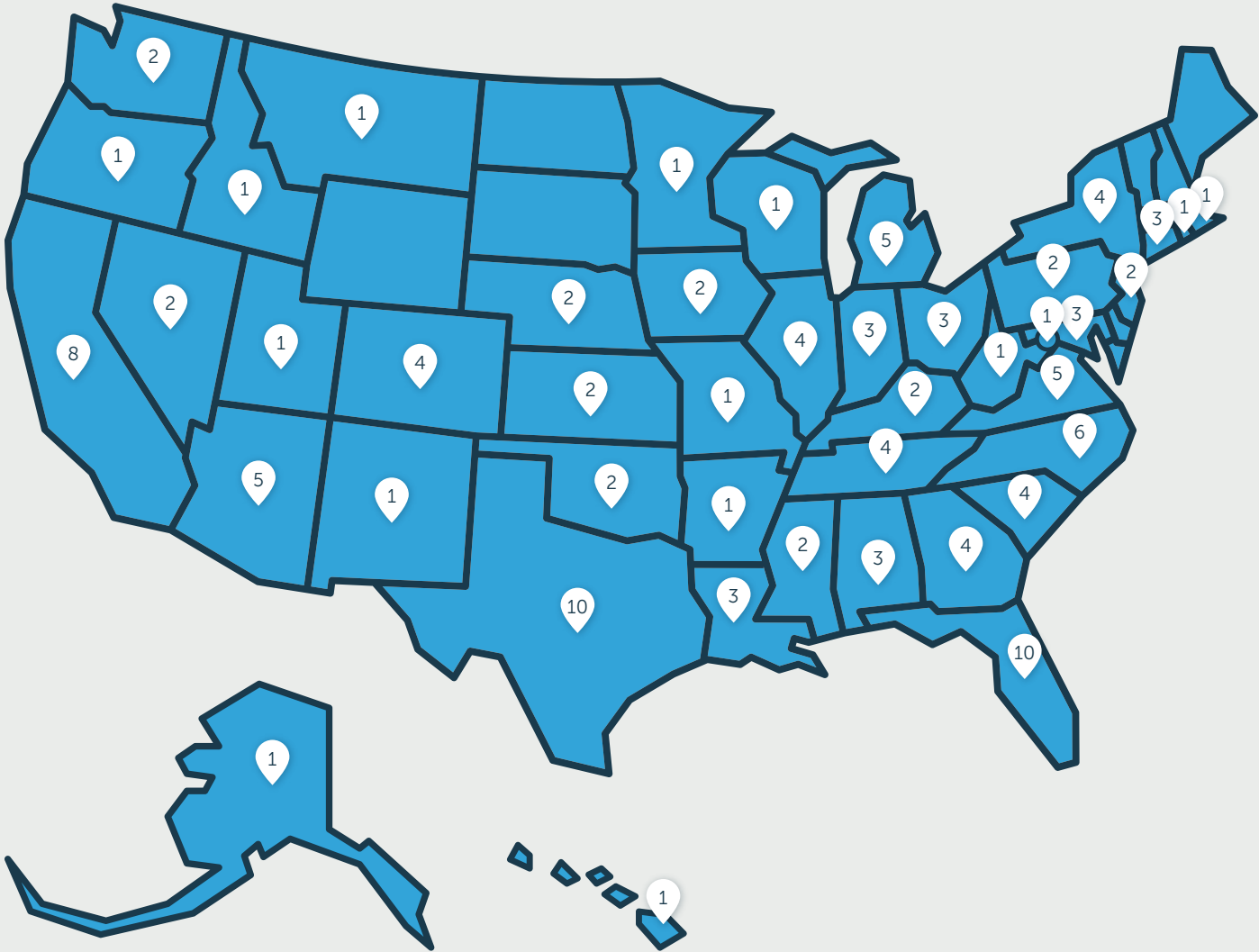
August is a natural checkpoint. A moment to assess, reset, and elevate.

The market will continue to evolve. The professionals who commit to excellence—who protect their standards and stay connected—will continue to rise.

Let’s keep raising the bar.

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WHAT TOP 1% AGENTS DO DIFFERENTLY

(That Has Nothing to Do With Sales)



The industry's highest performers don't separate themselves through better scripts or stronger negotiating—they build businesses through disciplined habits, intentional systems, and decisions that compound over time.

Ask someone what separates the top 1% of Realtors from everyone else, and you'll often hear the same answers: they're better negotiators, stronger salespeople, or simply work harder.

While those qualities certainly matter, they aren't what create sustained success over a decade or an entire career.

The biggest difference between high-performing agents and everyone else often has very little to do with selling homes. It has everything to do with how they run their business.

Top producers think like business owners first and Realtors second. They understand that every hour of every day is an investment. Instead of reacting to whatever lands on their calendar, they intentionally design their schedule around activities that create long-term growth. Prospecting, nurturing relationships, improving systems, and delivering an exceptional client experience become non-negotiable priorities—not tasks squeezed in when time allows.

They also recognize the value of systems. While many agents solve the same problems repeatedly, top performers build processes that eliminate unnecessary decisions. Whether it's onboarding a new client, preparing a listing, following up after closing, or staying connected with past customers, consistency replaces improvisation. Systems don't remove the personal touch—they make it easier to deliver one every time.

Another defining characteristic is their ability to protect their focus. Real estate is filled with distractions. Emails, text messages, social media, unexpected phone calls, and last-minute requests can quickly consume an entire day. Elite agents understand that saying "yes" to everything often means saying "no" to meaningful growth. They become disciplined about protecting uninterrupted time for the work that moves their business forward.

Relationships are another area where the top 1% think differently. They don't measure success by the number of transactions they closed this month. They measure it by the strength of the relationships they're building for the next ten years. Every client interaction, every networking event, every follow-up call, and every community connection becomes an opportunity to create trust that compounds over time.

Perhaps the biggest difference is their mindset toward improvement. They don't assume they've arrived simply because they're having a good year. They remain students of the business—reading, attending conferences, learning from peers, and constantly refining how they operate. They understand that the market will always evolve, and the agents who continue learning will always have an advantage.

The truth is, there is no secret script or magic marketing strategy that guarantees long-term success. The habits that build extraordinary businesses are often simple. They're just practiced with extraordinary consistency.

The agents who rise to the top aren't necessarily the most talented. More often, they're the ones who consistently make better business decisions long before those decisions show up in their production numbers.

Success in real estate isn't built by one great year. It's built by thousands of intentional decisions made day after day, long before anyone notices the results.

2026 REAL ESTATE RULE CHANGES:

WHAT WILMINGTON BROKERS NEED TO KNOW

As North Carolina's real estate market continues to evolve—especially in fast-growing coastal areas like Wilmington—2026 has introduced several regulatory updates that every broker, firm, and investor should understand. While none of these changes radically alter brokerage practice overnight, together they signal a continued push toward transparency, accountability, and professional standards.

Fee Adjustments and Administrative Updates

One of the most immediate changes impacting all licensees is financial. Effective April 1, 2026, the North Carolina Real Estate Commission (NCREC) increased the annual license renewal fee from \$45 to \$50. This modest adjustment reflects rising administrative costs but also reinforces the importance of timely renewal during the May 15–June 30 window.

Additionally, application fees for new brokers have increased slightly, now sitting at approximately \$105. While not burdensome, these incremental increases are worth factoring into brokerage budgeting and recruiting conversations.

Rule Modernization and Compliance Focus

The NCREC approved a series of rule updates in early 2026, many of which focus on clarifying existing practices rather than introducing entirely new ones. The overarching theme is tighter compliance—particularly around licensing, education, and brokerage conduct.

Education requirements remain consistent at 8 hours annually, but updated course content for 2025–2026 places heavier emphasis on legal updates, fair housing, and agency responsibilities. For Broker-in-Charge (BIC) roles, supervision and accountability continue to be a focal point, reflecting ongoing concerns about team structures and oversight.

Wholesaling Clarified as Brokerage Activity

Another important legislative update affecting investors and off-market transactions is the clarification that residential property wholesaling constitutes brokerage activity and therefore requires licensure.

This change is especially relevant in markets like Wilmington, where investment activity and assignment

contracts have grown in popularity. The law also introduces consumer protections, including cancellation rights for homeowners, signaling increased scrutiny of investor-driven transactions.

What This Means for Wilmington Professionals

For brokers operating in Wilmington and the surrounding Cape Fear region, the takeaway is clear: professionalism and compliance continue to take center stage. The regulatory environment is tightening—not dramatically, but steadily.

Firms should prioritize:

- Strong BIC oversight and documentation practices
- Clear communication around compensation structures
- Ongoing education that goes beyond minimum CE requirements
- Careful handling of investor and wholesale transactions

In a market defined by growth, relocation demand, and coastal investment, these updates reinforce a simple reality: the agents who succeed in 2026 and beyond will be those who adapt quickly, operate transparently, and stay ahead of regulatory change.

THE INVISIBLE COST OF BEING BUSY

In real estate, a full calendar often feels like success. But many agents are unknowingly sacrificing long-term growth by staying busy with the wrong work. Here’s why productivity—not activity—is the true competitive advantage.

Ask almost any Realtor how business is going, and you’ll probably hear the same response:

“I’m busy.”

In real estate, being busy has almost become a badge of honor. Calendars are packed with showings, listing appointments, inspections, phone calls, emails, marketing, paperwork, and client requests. Yet despite working long hours, many agents find themselves asking the same question at the end of every year:

“Why does it feel like I’m working harder than ever but not moving forward?”

The answer often lies in the difference between activity and progress.

Being busy creates motion. Building a business creates momentum.

Many agents spend their days responding instead of leading. Every notification becomes urgent. Every request demands immediate attention. Every day feels productive because it’s full. But fullness isn’t the same as effectiveness.

The most successful Realtors understand that not all work carries equal value.

An hour spent designing a system that saves time on every future transaction may be worth far more than an hour spent completing repetitive administrative tasks. Investing time in strengthening relationships with past clients often produces greater long-term returns than constantly chasing new leads. Improving the client experience may generate referrals that outperform hundreds of dollars in advertising.

Top producers aren’t less busy—they’re busy doing different things.

They regularly ask themselves difficult questions.

- What am I doing today that someone else could eventually do?
- What work actually grows my business?
- Where am I creating value that only I can provide?

Those questions force a shift from simply managing transactions to building an organization.

The reality is that growth often requires letting go of the work we’ve become comfortable doing. Delegating, creating systems, investing in technology, and improving processes may feel slower in the moment, but they create leverage that pays dividends for years.

The goal isn’t to become less busy.

The goal is to become intentionally busy.

Because there is an invisible cost to staying occupied with work that doesn’t move the business forward. It limits capacity. It delays growth. It prevents innovation. Most importantly, it steals time that could have been invested in building something much larger than today’s transaction.

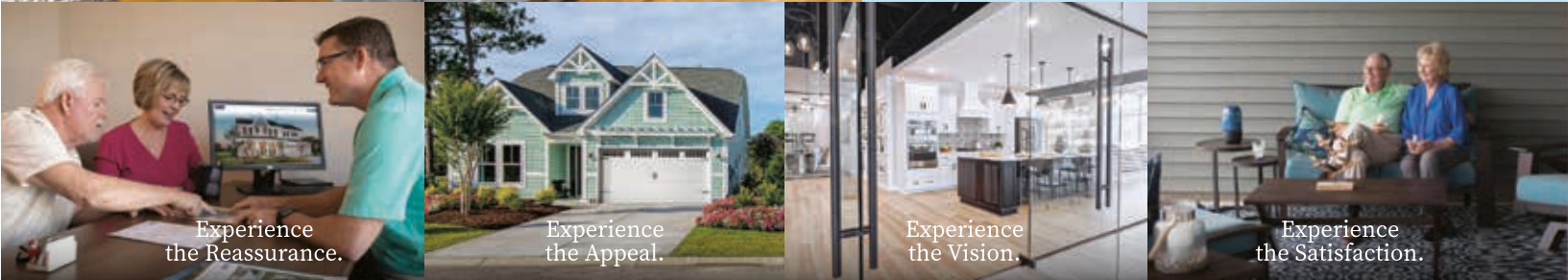
Busy creates income.

Leverage creates freedom.

The agents who recognize that difference are often the ones who build businesses that continue growing long after their calendars finally have room to breathe.



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MAGGIE *Lin*

BY DAVE DANIELSON

ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIPS

Maggie Lin's story doesn't follow a straight line into real estate success. It winds through entrepreneurship, motherhood, cultural transitions, and an unwavering commitment to doing things the right way. Today, she is a top-producing agent with Century 21 Coastal Advantage, but her path reflects resilience far more than luck.



In Oak Island, North Carolina, Maggie serves clients across coastal communities while balancing life as a single mother and youth coach. Her leadership is deeply rooted in family, discipline, and community.

From Taiwan to the Carolina Coast

Maggie was born and raised in Taiwan, where her father owned a commercial real estate company in Taipei. Despite growing up around the industry, she initially wanted to carve her own path. At 18, she moved to the United States to study business and marketing. Her original plan was to earn her degree and return to Taiwan to eventually take over her father's commercial real estate company. Life, however, had other plans, and she ended up building a life and career along the North Carolina coast.

Although life took her in a different direction, she still enjoys working alongside her father whenever she returns home, making those visits a meaningful blend of family, mentorship, and real estate.

Her education included studies at Webster University, Brunswick Community College, and the University of North Carolina Wilmington. Before entering real estate, she built and operated Pawsitive Mobile Pet Spa, a premium mobile pet grooming business that brought luxury grooming services directly to clients' homes. The business grew to include two full-time employees and remained fully booked for nearly three years, a reflection of the reputation she built through exceptional customer service.

Life shifted after her divorce. Seeking stability and a new direction, she unexpectedly found her way back to the industry she once avoided.

An Unexpected Path Into Real Estate

Maggie's entry into real estate wasn't planned. It was sparked by everyday conversations. As she visited Asian restaurants and connected with members of the local community, she often met Chinese and Taiwanese families who naturally turned to her for help understanding the home-buying process in the United States. Language became the bridge.

At first, she thought she was simply helping translate for a friend who was a Realtor. But when he encouraged her to get licensed instead of assisting informally, something clicked.

Even though English is her second language and she had heard how difficult the North Carolina licensing exam could be, she committed fully. She earned her real estate license on April 7, 2022, and is now approaching four and a half years in the industry.

She quickly established herself in the coastal North Carolina market through hard work, relationship-building, and a client-first approach.

Rising Through Achievement and Recognition

In just over four years, Maggie has helped clients buy and sell more than \$16 million in real estate, including a standout year with \$8.5 million in sales volume. Her accomplishments include

Monthly Top Agent honors, \$100K AGC recognition, and surpassing \$1 million in production within a single month. She also earned the Century 21 Emerald Award in 2025.

She has been ranked among the Top 100 Century 21 agents by AGC and recognized among the Top 300 Agents by Brunswick County Real Producers.

Her visibility expanded nationally when she appeared on HGTV's *Battle on the Beach*, a moment she describes as a major turning point in both her confidence and personal brand.

Whenever Maggie returns to Taiwan, she enjoys helping with her father's commercial real estate business by creating marketing materials and videos for luxury listings, including a palace. Just as meaningful to her is spending quality time with her dad discussing real estate, exchanging business ideas, and learning from one another's different perspectives. Those conversations continue to shape her approach to marketing, negotiation, and serving clients.

Breaking Stereotypes and Building Strength

Maggie is candid about the challenges she has faced. As a young Asian woman in real estate, she has occasionally encountered assumptions about her experience or abilities. Rather than focusing on those perceptions, she chooses to focus on what she can control: serving her clients well, continuing to learn, and building lasting relationships.



Her mindset is rooted in persistence. She believes challenges are opportunities for growth and that success comes from showing up consistently, working hard, and doing things the right way.

Her philosophy is simple: work hard, stay humble, treat people right, and let the results speak for themselves. To her, setbacks are not failures but lessons that make her stronger. She believes perseverance is one of the greatest keys

to success and that giving up is never an option.

A Life Built on Multiple Passions
Beyond real estate, Maggie is deeply committed to youth sports. She volunteers as a basketball and soccer coach through Southport Parks and Recreation and Brunswick County programs, including the Mighty Lions basketball team and the Southport Stars soccer team.

Her typical day begins early with preparing her children for school, working out, managing clients, networking, building relationships, planning practices, coaching, and spending quality time with her family. Life is busy, but intentionally structured around both family and career.

Family, Balance, and Community
As a single mother without nearby family support, Maggie has learned to blend work and parenting in creative ways. Her children often join her on showings or spend afternoons boating, fishing, and exploring Oak Island by golf cart. Summer evenings are filled with dancing together at summer concerts, ice cream runs, socializing with friends and clients, and meeting new people. Those moments remind her why she loves the community she calls home.

Giving back is equally important. Maggie sponsors a child in Africa each month, supports Southport Elementary School annually, and contributes to the Reassemble Retreat.

What Drives Her Forward
For Maggie, success is not defined solely by production numbers but by freedom, stability, and client satisfaction. She measures achievement by her ability to support her children independently



.....“

I often put myself in my client's shoes and ask, 'If this were me, how would I negotiate?' My focus is on what is best for the client, not on how much money I can make."





while delivering meaningful results for those she serves.

Growing up in Taiwan, she was taught the value of 以客為尊 (yǐ kè wéi zūn), a phrase that means “the customer comes first.” That mindset has shaped the way she approaches every relationship,

always putting her clients’ needs ahead of her own and treating every transaction as if it were for her own family.

Everything she does is driven by the desire to build a better future for her children while making a lasting impact

on the people she serves. She hopes her children grow up seeing that hard work, kindness, and integrity will always take them further than taking shortcuts.

Her advice to rising agents is direct.

“Always do it the right way. Be honest, stay genuine, and treat clients the way you want to be treated.”

She believes real estate is not transactional; it is relational. That belief shapes every negotiation, listing, and client interaction.

“I often put myself in my client’s shoes and ask, ‘If this were me, how would I negotiate?’ My focus is on what is best for the client, not on how much money I can make.”

A Future Built on Growth and Purpose

Looking ahead, Maggie aims to surpass her previous production records, continue expanding her expertise, and eventually purchase a waterfront home. She remains committed to studying communication, real estate strategy, and multilingual business development in both Mandarin and English.

Throughout her journey, Maggie has been fortunate to learn from mentors who helped shape both her career and her character. Her father and her first broker-in-charge, Sheri Dickson, taught her to always do things the right way, even when it is the more difficult path. Those lessons became the foundation of her business and continue to guide every client relationship, negotiation, and decision she makes.

As her business continues to grow, Maggie remains committed to serving others with honesty, integrity, and compassion while never losing sight of the values that brought her here.

At her core, Maggie Lin isn’t just building a successful real estate career. She’s building a legacy rooted in relationships, resilience, and doing things the right way. 🏡



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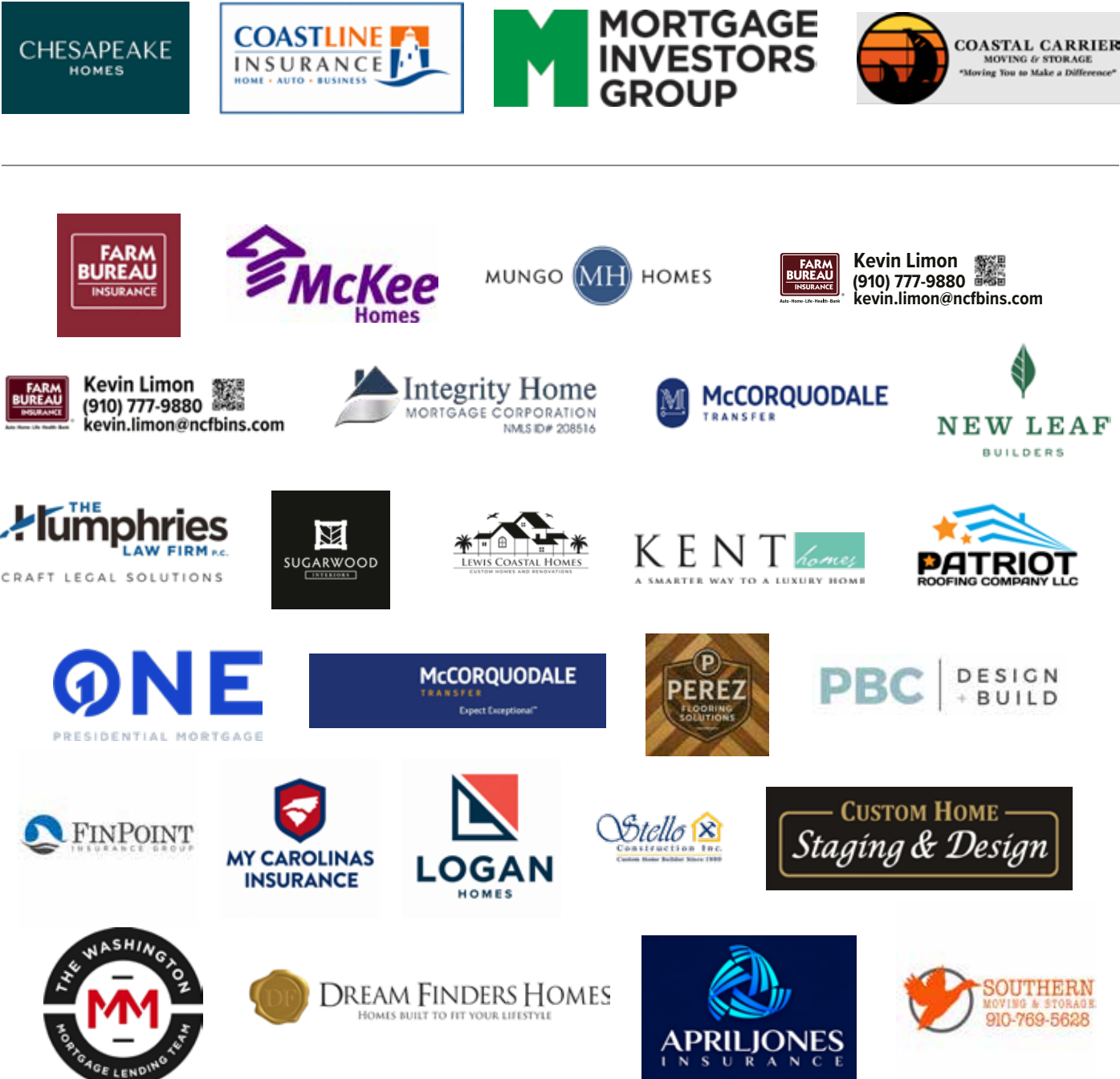
Top producers, builders, developers, and industry professionals came together for a morning of meaningful connections and practical lessons from some of the region’s most accomplished real estate professionals.



On August 6, Real Producers brought together leading REALTORS®, builders, developers, and industry professionals at Hotel Ballast for the 2026 Regional Builder Expo & Market Update.

The morning was built around two things that remain invaluable in real estate: **strong relationships** and **learning from people who have already achieved what others are working toward.**

The Builder Expo created the connections, giving agents direct access to builders and industry partners from across Southeastern North Carolina. The program that followed brought the experience—covering everything





from land and builder relationships to branding, luxury real estate, leadership, team culture, mindset, and the habits behind sustained success.

Experience Worth Sharing
Peter Vinal opened the program with a comprehensive look at commercial development and economic growth across the region, giving attendees a broader perspective on the projects and investment taking place throughout Southeastern North Carolina.

From there, five accomplished real estate professionals took the stage to share lessons drawn from very different paths to success.

Mike Rokoski broke down land and development, including how to recognize development potential, better position land for sale, and become a valuable resource to builders rather than simply another agent sending them listings.

Julio Fuentes shared how differentiation, branding, niche expertise, relationships, and relentless work helped him build his business in a highly competitive industry. He also spoke about the importance of understanding every side of a transaction to better serve the client.

Lynne Galloway offered a look inside luxury real estate, from winning high-end clients to marketing properties at a level that reflects their value and understanding how luxury buyer expectations have evolved.

Stephanie Lanier focused on leadership and culture—sharing insight into building a high-performing team, identifying the qualities that can't be taught, and creating an environment where talented people want to stay.

Jack Hamilton drew from decades of transactions and coaching to address the habits, mindset, and mistakes that separate agents who consistently perform at a high level from those who struggle to reach the next level.





Different specialties. Different experiences. Different paths to success. **But each conversation gave attendees something they could take back and apply to their own business.**

More Than \$50,000 Given Back to the Room

The morning also came with some serious surprises.

Dream Finders Homes gave away \$50,000 in commission vouchers, while participating builders and Real Producers Preferred Partners contributed more than \$3,000 in additional raffles and prizes throughout the event.

Events like this are possible because of partners who continue to invest in our local real estate community. A special thank-you to our Cape Fear event sponsors and partners: **Dream Finders Homes, Coastline Insurance, The Humphries Law Firm, Custom Home Staging & Design, Southern Moving & Storage, and The Washington Mortgage Lending Team.**

Beyond the speakers, giveaways, and presentations, however, the greatest value of the morning may have been much simpler: **getting the right people in the same room.**

Builders met agents. Relationships were strengthened. Ideas were exchanged. New connections were made. And professionals from across the region had the opportunity to learn from one another.

Thank you to **Peter Vinal, Mike Rokoski, Julio Fuentes, Jack Hamilton, Stephanie Lanier, and Lynne Galloway**, along with every builder, partner, sponsor, and REALTOR® who helped make the 2026 Regional Builder Expo & Market Update such a success.

Real estate is built on relationships. And the stronger those relationships become, the stronger our entire real estate community becomes. 📌









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Visited their website **21%**

Recommended the
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Visited a social media site/app **20%**

Cut out or saved the ad **11%**

Any Action taken 76%

BUSTED

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Source: MRI-Simmons, Starch Advertising Research, January-December 2021



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