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Rising Star
AMBER GRAY

Partner Spotlight
**MAGNOLIA
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Event Recap

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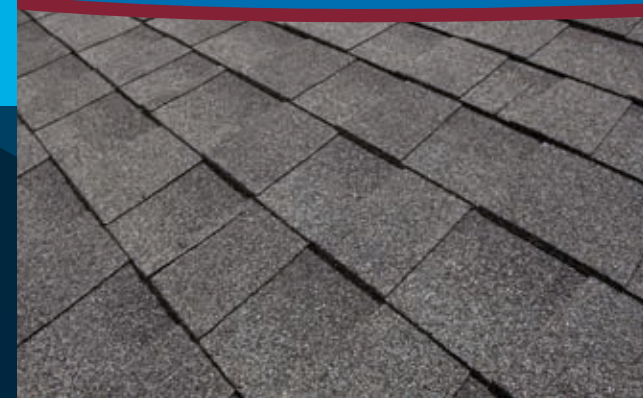
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August 2026

As we welcome the month of August, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to each of you who continues to support and engage with *Columbia Real Producers*. Whether you have been a loyal reader since our very first issue or recently joined our growing community, your support is what makes this publication possible. Every month, we have the privilege of sharing the stories, successes, and journeys of some of the most dedicated real estate professionals and industry partners in the Midlands, and it is an honor to celebrate the people who help make our local real estate community so exceptional.

One of the most rewarding aspects of publishing this magazine is the opportunity to highlight the individuals whose commitment, leadership, and service are making a meaningful impact in our industry. This month, we are proud to feature **Lori Carnes of Keller Williams Palmetto** as our Cover Feature. Lori's dedication to her clients, passion for the profession, and unwavering commitment to excellence have earned her a well-deserved place in the spotlight. Her story is one of perseverance, professionalism, and purpose, and we are excited for you to learn more about her journey.

We are also honored to recognize **Devin Ihme of Real Broker** as our Top Producer Feature. Devin's success is a testament to the power of hard work, consistency, and a client-first approach. His accomplishments continue to inspire those around him, and his story offers valuable insight into what it takes to thrive in today's ever-changing real estate market.

This month's Rising Star Feature shines on **Amber Gray of the Chucktown Homes Team**. Amber represents the next generation of industry leaders, bringing energy, determination, and a genuine passion for helping others achieve their real estate goals. Her rapid growth and commitment to serving her clients demonstrate why she is a rising talent worth watching.

We are equally excited to highlight **Magnolia Inspection Company** in our Partner Spotlight. Behind every successful transaction is a network of trusted professionals who help ensure clients receive exceptional service throughout the process. Magnolia Inspection Company exemplifies the professionalism, reliability, and expertise that make our industry stronger, and we are grateful for the

role they play in supporting agents and homeowners alike.

As you turn the pages of this issue, I hope you find inspiration in these stories and in the many achievements represented throughout our community. Real estate is more than transactions—it is about relationships, service, leadership, and the impact we make in the lives of others. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your journey and for continuing to make *Columbia Real Producers* a publication worth celebrating month after month. We are grateful for each of you and look forward to continuing to share the stories that make this community so remarkable.

Wishing you a successful, productive, and rewarding August.



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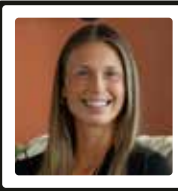
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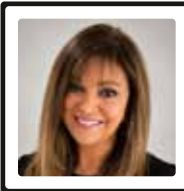
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The thought of inspections can daunt even the most savvy of homebuyers.

But Columbia homebuyers have an ace up their sleeve: Jacob Stevenson. When he founded Magnolia Inspection Company, he set out to do more than just check boxes on a home inspection report. He created a service dedicated to empowering home buyers and real estate professionals with comprehensive, easy-to-understand information that transforms one of life's biggest decisions into a confident next step.

As a licensed home inspector serving the Columbia area, Jacob brings a meticulous eye and genuine passion for helping people understand the true condition of their potential investment. His approach goes above and beyond simply identifying issues. He takes time to educate clients about their homes, explaining systems and components in ways that make sense to both first-time buyers and seasoned homeowners.

What sets Magnolia Inspection Company apart is Jacob's dedication to thoroughness without sacrificing clarity. He understands that a home inspection report can feel overwhelming, so he's committed to delivering complicated construction issues in simple, easy to understand language. His inspections cover all the critical areas, from foundation to roof, electrical systems to plumbing, HVAC to structural integrity, ensuring nothing is overlooked. But it's his ability to communicate

these detailed assessments in a clear, accessible format that his customers truly appreciate. Jacob's clients know exactly what they are buying when they sign the dotted line.

The company serves the Columbia market with a focus on building lasting relationships with real estate agents and their clients. Jacob recognizes that agents need a reliable inspection partner they can trust to treat every client with professionalism and respect. His timely reports and willingness to answer follow-up questions make him an invaluable resource throughout the transaction process.

For real estate professionals, Jacob understands the delicate balance of providing honest, thorough inspections while keeping transactions moving forward. He maintains a reputation for being fair and objective, never creating unnecessary alarm while also never minimizing legitimate concerns. This balanced approach has made him a trusted partner for agents who want their clients well-informed without deals falling apart over minor issues.

Jacob's advice to home buyers is straightforward: never skip the inspection, and always attend in person if possible. Being present during the inspection allows buyers to ask questions, learn about their potential home's systems, and develop a maintenance plan from day one. He believes an informed buyer is a confident buyer, and that confidence creates better outcomes for everyone involved in the transaction.



As Magnolia Inspection Company continues serving the Columbia area, Jacob Stevenson remains committed to his founding principle: providing inspection services that protect his clients' interests while fostering trust and transparency in every real estate transaction. For agents seeking a dependable inspection partner, Magnolia Inspection Company delivers the professionalism and expertise that keeps deals on track and clients satisfied. ▀

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LORI CARNES AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

Some careers are built. Others are lived, shaped over time by experience, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to people. For Lori Carnes, real estate has never simply been a profession—it has been a calling rooted in curiosity, strengthened through adversity, and elevated by a genuine passion for serving others at the highest level.



Long before contracts and closings, Lori's love for real estate began in the simplest of ways: walking through homes with her mother as a child, imagining the possibilities within each space. That early fascination quietly planted the seed for what would become a remarkable career spanning more than 30 years. Beginning in property management in 1995 and officially earning her real estate license in 2000, Lori built her foundation from the ground up—learning not only the mechanics of the industry, but the human side of it as well.

Her journey has never been defined by a straight line. From South Carolina to Florida and back again, Lori has navigated multiple markets and major industry shifts, including the intensity of booming markets and the challenges

of downturns like the 2005–2006 market correction. Rather than retreat during difficult seasons, she leaned in—adapting, evolving, and finding opportunity where others saw obstacles. Whether working with foreclosures during market shifts or stepping into new construction with D.R. Horton in 2013, Lori developed a reputation for seeing potential where others could not. She built a niche around strategically positioning and successfully selling homes that others found difficult, proving early on that her approach was anything but ordinary.

That same drive led her to Keller Williams, where she not only grew her personal business but stepped into leadership, earning her Broker's license, teaching real estate courses, and ultimately becoming Broker-

in-Charge at Keller Williams Palmetto in 2020. Her ability to lead while continuing to produce at a high level speaks to the balance she has carefully cultivated—one that blends strategy, experience, and heart.

Today, Lori has built more than a business—she has built a team and a legacy. With over \$110 million in career sales and nearly \$11.7 million in volume last year alone, her results speak for themselves. But numbers only tell part of the story. Behind those transactions are relationships—clients she has guided through first homes, growing families, relocations, and even downsizing years later. For Lori, every transaction represents a chapter in someone's life, and being trusted in those moments is not something she takes lightly.

Favorite Quote:

“PEOPLE WILL FORGET WHAT YOU SAID,
BUT THEY WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU
MADE THEM FEEL.” – MAYA ANGELOU



As her business has grown, Lori has intentionally surrounded herself with people who share her commitment to excellence and client care. Alongside her son, Nicholas, who

recently joined the team as a buyer’s agent, Lori works closely with Kaylyn, her Executive Assistant and Client Care Manager, who also happens to be a licensed real estate broker.

More than just a vital part of the business, Lori describes Kaylyn as “her rock”—someone whose brilliance, loyalty, and dedication help create the elevated experience

their clients receive every step of the way. Their partnership is built not only on professionalism and trust, but also on a genuine friendship that has become an important part of the



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foundation behind Lori's success. Lori's team also includes a showing assistant who helps ensure buyers are able to tour homes and stay actively engaged in the market, even when Lori's schedule is full. Together, the team creates a seamless, high-touch experience rooted in communication, responsiveness, and care.

Perhaps one of the most meaningful evolutions in her career has been welcoming her son, Nicholas, onto her team as a buyer's agent. What began as a personal pursuit has grown into something far greater—a shared vision, a family legacy, and a business built not just for today, but for the future. Alongside her husband, a builder, and her two sons, Nick and Timmy, real estate is woven into the fabric of her everyday life. Yet, even with such deep professional roots, Lori treasures the simple moments—time spent on the water, traveling, or relaxing together as a family.

Lori's path to success has not been without hardship. Becoming independent at a young age, she learned early on the value of grit, perseverance, and self-reliance. She openly shares that she has



become an expert at “failing forward”—using every challenge as a stepping stone rather than a setback. That mindset, paired with the profound influence of her late sister—a woman she describes as a true powerhouse who rose to Regional Vice President at Bank of America while lifting others along the way—has shaped Lori into the resilient, compassionate leader she is today.

In business, Lori is known for her personalized, relationship-driven approach. She doesn't just help clients find homes—she helps them find the right fit for their lives, their goals, and their future. Whether working with buyers, sellers, or builders, she brings a level of strategy and care that ensures every client feels seen, heard, and supported. From showcasing Lake Murray properties by both land and water to leveraging decades

of market insight, she continually raises the bar for what a client experience should be.

Beyond her individual business, Lori is deeply committed to the industry and community she serves. Through her involvement with the South Carolina Realtors Association Board of Directors and her leadership as RPAC Committee Chair for the Central Carolina Realtors Association, she actively works to protect property rights and strengthen the future of real estate. Her passion for community connection extends even further, having hosted a local radio show dedicated to supporting small businesses and

encouraging others to invest in their local economy.

At her core, Lori defines success not by numbers alone, but by impact, relationships, and legacy. It's about the people she helps, the trust she builds, and the example she sets for those around her. She leads with intention, serves with heart, and shows up every day with a relentless commitment to excellence.

When asked what she wants to be remembered for, her answer is simple yet powerful: making a difference through the relationships she built and the way she showed up. And in every sense of the word, that is exactly what she is doing. ❏



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SUMMER SOCIAL

Brings Together the Best in Columbia Real Estate



On June 2, 2026, *Columbia Real Producers* welcomed the Top 350 real estate professionals in the Columbia market, along with *Columbia Real Producers* Alumni and Preferred Partners, for an unforgettable Summer Social at Prohibition in Downtown Columbia.

Held in one of the city’s most popular gathering spots, the event provided the perfect backdrop for an afternoon filled with meaningful conversations, valuable connections, and celebration of the professionals who continue to elevate the real estate industry throughout the Midlands.

From the moment guests arrived, the atmosphere was energized with

excitement and camaraderie. Attendees enjoyed complimentary specialty cocktails and an impressive selection of heavy hors d’oeuvres provided by Prohibition while networking with some of the most accomplished agents and industry leaders in the region. The event offered a unique opportunity for top producers to step away from their busy schedules, strengthen existing relationships, and build new connections within the *Columbia Real Producers* community.

One of the hallmarks of *Columbia Real Producers* events is the commitment to creating exclusive experiences for the area’s leading real estate professionals. The Summer Social was no exception.

The invite-only gathering brought together a room full of dedicated agents, trusted Preferred Partners, and industry influencers who share a common goal of supporting one another and contributing to the continued growth of the Columbia real estate market.

The afternoon was filled with engaging conversations, collaboration, and plenty of laughter as attendees connected with colleagues and celebrated the successes of the first half of 2026. Events like these continue to reinforce the mission of *Columbia Real Producers*: fostering relationships, encouraging collaboration, and creating opportunities for top professionals to thrive both personally and professionally.



CONTINUED ►



A special thank you goes to our event sponsors, **SwampRabbit Moving and New Level Construction**, whose support helped make this incredible event possible. We would also like to recognize our media team, **Greenville Real Estate Productions (GVL REP)** and **Amy Porter PP's Photography**, for capturing the energy, connections, and memorable moments throughout the afternoon.

As *Columbia Real Producers* continues to bring together the best agents and partners in the market, we look forward to many more opportunities to connect, celebrate, and grow together. If the Summer Social was any indication, the second half of 2026 is shaping up to be an exciting season for Columbia real estate.

We look forward to seeing everyone at our upcoming *Columbia Real Producers* events as we continue building relationships, celebrating success, and strengthening the community that makes *Columbia Real Producers* so special. 🍷



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Amber Gray's Story of Resilience and Rise

Amber Gray's story is not one of overnight success—it is a story defined by resilience, rebuilding, and a deep commitment to creating a life rooted in purpose. As a Rising Star with the Chucktown Homes Team at LPT Realty, Amber has quickly established herself as a trusted and heartfelt presence in the real estate industry, but it is the journey behind her success that truly sets her apart.

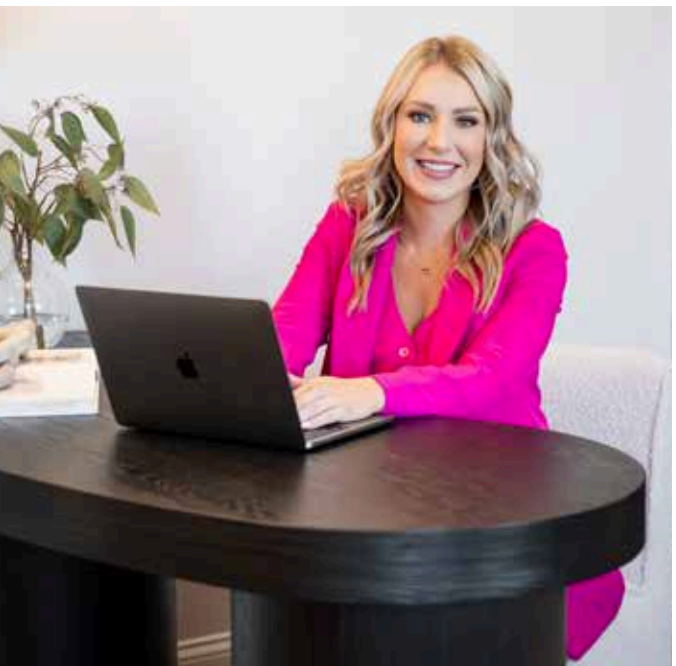
In 2022, Amber made the life-changing decision to relocate from the West Coast to South Carolina with her family, stepping into a new chapter filled with both excitement and uncertainty. Just one year later, in 2023, she earned her real estate license—marking the beginning of a new professional path. But that same month, her life shifted dramatically as she went through a separation after 16 years. Suddenly, Amber found herself starting over completely—without a home, without financial stability, and navigating life as a single mother of four in a brand-new state. It was, by her own reflection, one of the most difficult seasons of her life. But rather than allowing those circumstances to define her, Amber chose to rise.

With unwavering determination, she committed herself to rebuilding—both personally and professionally. No matter how long it took or how hard it became, she would create a new foundation for herself and her children. For two years, she worked tirelessly—seven days a week building her real estate business while also working nights in the service industry just to make ends meet. The days were long and the weight she carried was heavy, but her focus never wavered. She showed up—again and again—not just for her business, but for her children, determined not only to survive, but to create stability, a loving home, and opportunity for her family.

That consistency, that grit, and that heart became the foundation of everything she is today.

Amber is a devoted mother to her four children—Caiden, Alexis, Parker, and Tinsley—and they remain the heart behind everything she does. Through every setback and every long night, it was her children who became her greatest source of strength and motivation. Balancing the demands of entrepreneurship with motherhood, she made it a priority to stay deeply involved in their lives, whether through everyday routines or shared moments outdoors, by the water, or exploring new places together. Her journey has become a living example for her children of resilience, perseverance, and the power of starting again.

It was this unwavering commitment to her family that fueled her determination to push forward in her career. As a real estate agent, Amber specializes in helping first-time homebuyers and transplants—clients who often find themselves navigating unfamiliar territory, much like she once did. She approaches each relationship with empathy, honesty, care, and intention.



She takes the time to truly LISTEN and understand her clients' lifestyles, priorities, goals, fears, and what "home" means to them. Rather than simply sending listings, she becomes a guide—offering honest insight, steady communication, and reassurance throughout every step of the process.

One of her most meaningful experiences involved helping a relocating family who was purchasing a home from a distance while under significant pressure and uncertainty. With children to consider and an entirely new area to navigate, the process felt overwhelming. Amber stepped in as both guide and advocate, taking time to understand their needs beyond just the home itself—school systems, neighborhoods, lifestyle fit, and long-term comfort. Through consistent communication and steady support, she helped them move through each stage with confidence. When they finally closed on their home, the moment was not just about a transaction—it was about relief, peace, and the feeling of finally being settled. For Amber, those moments define her purpose. "It's so much more than real estate," she reflects. "It's about being there for people during some of the biggest transitions of their lives."

Now firmly rooted with the Chucktown Homes Team, Amber has found the alignment she had been searching for—a place where mentorship, growth, and shared values come together. That sense of belonging has only fueled her passion further. Today, she is focused on growing her business with heart, trust, and intention, helping clients turn what once felt impossible into reality. She is especially passionate about creating opportunities for others to achieve homeownership, while continuing to build a reputation grounded in integrity and meaningful relationships.

In just over two years in the industry, Amber has produced \$8.5 million in volume and continues to build momentum. Yet she remains grounded in her approach, focused not on numbers, but on relationships. Her definition of success is rooted in trust, service, and impact—measured in the families she helps, the repeat clients she earns, and the referrals that come from genuine connection.

Outside of real estate, Amber finds joy in life's simple and meaningful moments. She loves spending time outdoors with her children—whether by the water, in the mountains, or simply enjoying fresh air and sunshine together. She's a coffee enthusiast who enjoys discovering local cafés, attending markets, listening to live music, and embracing spontaneous adventures whenever possible. These moments not only recharge her, but keep her grounded in what matters most.

Looking ahead, Amber sees real estate as a long-term path for both personal and professional growth. Her vision extends beyond individual success—she hopes to continue building a reputation rooted in trust, integrity, and meaningful client relationships, while also expanding her ability to give back in the future, particularly to women's shelters supporting those experiencing domestic violence.



For those entering the industry, Amber offers a perspective shaped by experience rather than theory. She believes success in real estate is built on consistency, adaptability, and heart. Markets will shift and challenges will come, but those who remain committed to showing up with integrity will endure. She encourages new agents to prioritize relationships over transactions, stay coachable, and trust their own journey rather than comparing it to others.

At her core, Amber leads with heart. It is the thread that weaves through every part of her story—from the challenges she has overcome to the way she serves her clients today. She defines success not by closings, but by connection—by the trust she builds, the relationships she nurtures, and the lives she touches along the way. For those entering the industry, her advice is simple yet powerful: stay consistent, stay coachable, and never lose sight of your why. In a business where comparison can be overwhelming, Amber remains grounded in her own journey, knowing that authenticity is what truly sets an agent apart.

When asked what she hopes to be remembered for, her answer is as genuine as her approach to business: showing up for people when they need it most. Not just as a Realtor, but as someone who listens, cares, and walks alongside them with compassion and honesty. Because for Amber Gray, this journey has never been just about selling homes—it's about helping others find their way home, even in life's most uncertain moments. ▀



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AMY PORTER

Not a Straight Line: The Story Behind Devin Ihme's Success

There are careers that follow a straight line—and then there are careers like Devin Ihme's, shaped by experience, resilience, and a willingness to evolve. As a Top Producer and owner of Lakeside Team at Real Broker, LLC, Devin's journey into real estate is anything but conventional. And yet, it's precisely that winding path that has given him the depth, perspective, and authenticity that define both his business and the way he serves others.

Devin first entered the real estate world in 2004, inspired by the success of close friends

and driven by the promise of independence and unlimited potential. At the time, he was working at Fox 102.3 radio as a DJ, a creative and fast-paced environment that sharpened his communication skills but offered limited long-term growth. While those early years in real estate laid an important foundation, life would eventually lead him in other directions—back into radio as a Promotions Director, then into bartending while pursuing a future in nursing. Each chapter added a new layer: marketing savvy, people skills, grit, and adaptability. But it wasn't until 2013, after a season of personal reflection

and recovery from a back injury, that Devin made the decision to return to real estate—this time with clarity, purpose, and a vision for something greater.

That decision would prove to be a turning point. Later returning and joining ERA Wilder reignited his career, and from there, his trajectory continued upward. He went on to build his business at RE/MAX, where he achieved Hall of Fame status, earned his broker's license in 2015, and eventually launched his own team, Lakeside Team, in 2019. In 2021, Devin made the strategic move to Real Broker, drawn to its forward-thinking model,

innovative opportunities, and alignment with the long-term vision he had for his career and his family. Today, with nearly \$75 million in personal production and over 360 sales, his consistency and commitment speak for themselves. But for Devin, success has never been defined by numbers alone.

What truly sets Devin apart is his ability to connect—with clients, with fellow agents, and with the purpose behind his work. He describes himself as caring, driven, and grounded, and those qualities are evident in every aspect of his business. Whether he's helping a first-time homebuyer navigate unfamiliar territory or guiding a veteran through the process of finding a place to call home, Devin approaches each transaction with intention and care. He thrives not just in finding the right home, but in what comes after—negotiating, advocating, and ensuring his clients feel confident every step of the way. It's a philosophy rooted in service, something he reinforces with a simple yet powerful principle he's carried over from the hospitality industry: keep the glass full. Anticipate needs, stay proactive, and never let the client feel anything less than supported.

Behind the success, however, is a story marked by both triumph and hardship. One of the most defining challenges Devin has faced came during a deeply difficult season in his personal life, when he lost both his mother—his last living parent—and his uncle within a short period of time. In the midst of grief, he continued to lead his team and show up for his clients, even when there was little room to pause. It was during that time that the true meaning of his work revealed itself. The trust his clients placed in him,

the relationships he had built, and the responsibility he carried became a source of strength. In many ways, serving others helped him heal. Supported by his wife, Rachel, and his team, Devin pressed forward, embodying the resilience that has become a cornerstone of his story.

At home, that same sense of purpose and gratitude continues. Devin and Rachel, married for nearly 13 years, are raising their two sons, these are three individuals he describes as smart, witty, and full of heart. Family is at the center of everything he does. Whether it's hiking trails together, enjoying a quiet movie night, or simply spending time in each other's presence, those moments are what ground him.

It's also what fuels his vision for the future: a life where real estate continues to provide not just income, but freedom—the ability to travel, to explore, and eventually to slow down and savor the life he has worked so hard to build.

That perspective extends into his passion for mentoring other agents. Devin finds genuine fulfillment in helping others discover what's possible within this industry—not just in terms of production, but in building a life. He believes real estate can be a vehicle for long-term wealth, flexibility, and opportunity, but only if approached with intention and a willingness to grow. He encourages new agents to stay adaptable, to invest wisely, and

Photo By: Calico-Photography





Favorite Quote:
 Devin says cue up “Eye of the Tiger” by Survivor as he leaves you with one of his company’s core values: **Work Hard, Be Kind**

to never lose sight of the bigger picture. Success, in his eyes, isn’t just about closing deals—it’s about creating a life where you’re not constantly chasing the next one.

Outside of business, Devin embraces life with the same sense of curiosity and balance that defines his career. He has traveled extensively and once spent five months living in Sri Lanka—an experience that ultimately helped launch his journey into radio. He finds peace in nature, often seeking out hiking trails and time near the water to reset and recharge. He enjoys billiards, traveling to new places, and simply being present in the moment. It’s this balance—between ambition and appreciation—that shapes both his approach to business and the life he continues to build.

For Devin, success is less about a milestone and more about a feeling: the ability to provide for his family, to spend meaningful time with the people he loves, and to experience the world without the constant pressure of “what’s next.” It’s a mindset that shapes not only how he lives, but how he leads. He is proof that you can build a serious business while still being yourself, that you can find joy in the process, and that success doesn’t have to come at the expense of everything else.

As he continues to grow his business and look toward the future, one thing remains clear—Devin Ihme is not just building a career. He’s building a life, one that reflects resilience, purpose, and a deep commitment to serving others well. And if there’s one thing he hopes people remember, it’s simple: that along the way, he created a life filled with meaningful moments, genuine connections, and plenty of reasons to smile. 🍷

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