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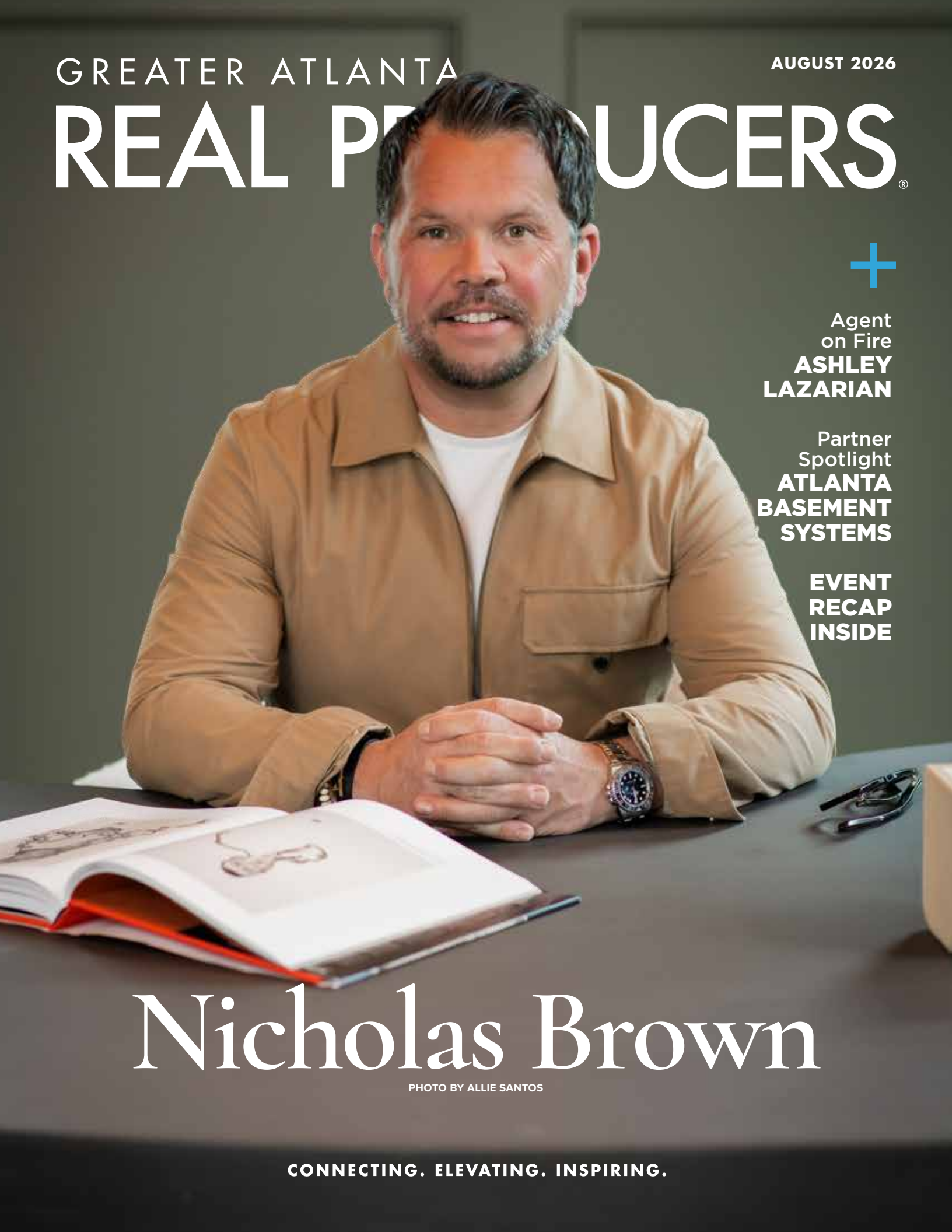
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Agent
on Fire
**ASHLEY
LAZARIAN**

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Spotlight
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RECAP
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Nicholas Brown

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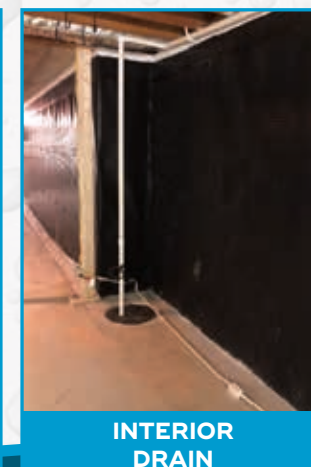


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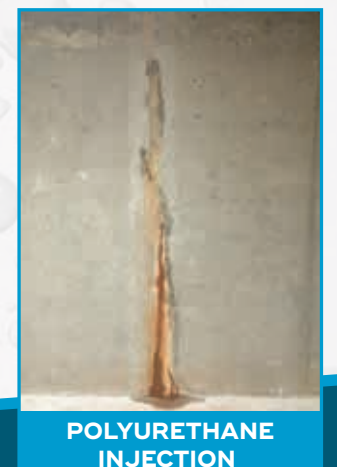
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10 Nicholas Brown
COVER STORY

If you are interested in nominating people for certain stories, please email us at ahutch@realproducersmag.com



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NICHOLAS
BROWN

SUCCESS STORIES OFTEN BEGIN WITH A DREAM.
NICHOLAS BROWN'S BEGAN WITH SURVIVAL.

Today, Nicholas is known for helping clients navigate luxury real estate with confidence and clarity, but his journey to becoming a respected real estate agent was anything but conventional. From growing up in a hardworking community in Northeast England to rebuilding his

life after losing a business, every chapter has shaped the way he approaches both business and life.

"I grew up in the Northeast of England, between Durham and Newcastle," Nicholas said. "It was a hardworking blue-collar part of the country where people valued

honesty, resilience, and earning your place."

Those values have never left him.

Although Nicholas earned a bachelor's degree in Hotel Catering and Institutional Management from Newcastle University, he believes his

greatest education happened outside the classroom.

"Most of my real education came from life, travel, business, and experience," he said. "I've always been someone who learns by doing."



That hands-on mindset started early. Nicholas has been working since he was 13 years old, spending his teenage years in busy Italian restaurants where speed, teamwork, and customer service weren't optional.

"It taught me how to move quickly, think on my feet, and thrive under

pressure," he said. "Those early experiences instilled a strong work ethic and an appreciation for service."

His career eventually included opportunities with luxury brands including Ritz-Carlton, BMW, Mercedes-Benz and Stella Artois, experiences that helped shape his understanding of

presentation, communication and exceptional service.

Real estate entered Nicholas' life in 2009 during one of its most difficult chapters.

"I had previously built and lost a business," he said. "Like many people during that period, I found myself having to start over."

What began as a way to provide for his family soon evolved into something much more meaningful.

"Real estate wasn't some lifelong dream. It was an opportunity to survive," he said. "What started as survival eventually became a passion."

That passion comes from the variety the profession offers every day.

"I discovered that the business combined many things I genuinely love: people, negotiation, design, construction, marketing, strategy and problem-solving."

Today, Nicholas has found a home with Compass, a brokerage that matches his vision for delivering exceptional client experiences.

"Technology matters. Marketing matters. Brand matters," he said. "But what mattered most was finding a platform that allowed me to continue building relationships while delivering a higher level of service."

For Nicholas, however, logos and marketing materials are secondary to what truly matters.

"At the end of the day, clients hire people, not logos."

Ask Nicholas what he wants people to know about him, and the answer comes quickly.

"That I care."

It's a simple statement, but one that carries significant weight.

"I care about the outcome. I care about the details. I care

about the people involved. I care about getting it right."

Rather than viewing each transaction as another sale, Nicholas approaches every client relationship as a responsibility.

"If someone trusts me with one of the largest financial decisions of their life, I take that seriously."

That mindset extends to the changing real estate market as well.

"Buyers are becoming increasingly sophisticated," he said. "They're doing more research. They're asking better questions."

He believes quality, thoughtful presentation and strong representation matter now more than ever.

"The gap between average representation and exceptional representation is becoming more obvious."

Nicholas is especially energized by luxury homes, development opportunities and thoughtful design.

"I enjoy helping clients identify opportunities before everyone else sees them," he said. "There is something incredibly rewarding about taking an idea from concept to completion."

While work is an important part of his life, family remains his greatest motivation.

Outside of real estate, Nicholas enjoys a full and active family life. A home is a place filled with energy, laughter, and the

constant pace that comes with a busy household. Those everyday moments have become some of life's greatest rewards. "Success in business is meaningful, but it's never been the measure of a fulfilling life," Nicholas says. "The time you spend with the people you love, the experiences you create together, and the memories you build along the way—that's what matters most."

That perspective influences not only how he lives, but also how he serves his clients. He understands that buying or selling a home isn't simply a financial transaction—it's often the backdrop for life's most important moments and the place where families create their own lasting memories.

"I'm a bit of a sponge when it comes to information," he said. "I'd rather spend my time learning from people who are smarter than I am."

One of the defining moments of Nicholas' career came shortly after the 2008 financial crisis while working with a builder who found himself in financial trouble.

The day before closing on a home, the builder called with an unexpected request.

"He said, 'Nicholas, I'm losing money on this house. I need you to take a zero commission.'"

At the time, the commission was approximately



\$24,000, money Nicholas desperately needed as he rebuilt his own life.

"I remember sitting there genuinely upset," he said. "I cried."

Instead of protecting his paycheck, Nicholas chose to protect the relationship.

"I decided to trust the relationship instead of the transaction."

That decision paid dividends for years to come as the builder became one of his most valued long-term clients.

"The lesson wasn't really about the money," Nicholas said. "It was about understanding the difference between short-term gain and long-term relationships."

That philosophy continues to define both his business and his brand today.

"My job is to provide clarity when the stakes are high, confidence when uncertainty exists, and guidance when important decisions need to be made," he said.

Sometimes that means encouraging clients to move forward. Other times, it means advising them to walk away.

"My responsibility remains the same," Nicholas said. "To put their interests ahead of my own."

In the end, Nicholas believes homes may be what he sells, but trust is what he truly builds.

"Real estate happens to be the vehicle," he said. "Trust is the business." 🏡

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Finding the Perfect Fit

PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

Ashley Lazarian

There are plenty of agents who can sell a house. Ashley Lazarian has spent the last two decades proving that selling a house is only a small part of the job. More than 20 years after stepping into the industry, Ashley has built a career rooted in authenticity, relationships and a genuine love for helping people find not just a house, but a place to call home. That philosophy has fueled a career built largely on repeat clients and referrals, something she considers a far greater compliment than any sales award. Raised in Atlanta's northern suburbs, Ashley knows the communities she serves not just as market statistics on a spreadsheet, but as the backdrop of her own life. She understands which neighborhoods come alive on Saturday mornings, where families gather after school, which parks become second homes for little league teams, and where newcomers eventually begin to feel like locals. That local perspective has become one of her greatest strengths. "The internet can tell you how many bedrooms a house has," she explains. "It can't tell you what your weekends will feel like." That sense of purpose wasn't something she planned.

Originally studying Interior Design, Ashley worked as a dental assistant through college before joining a small design firm. A year after applying for a position with a national homebuilder, and assuming she hadn't gotten the job, the phone finally rang. "They hired me to run their design studio, which was my first real taste of real estate and the home building process and eventually led to my earning my real estate license. Just as her career was taking shape, the housing market collapsed. The builder closed its doors in 2009. "It was sink or swim. I made the decision to pivot and go all in on residential real estate and haven't looked back." That willingness to adapt has become one of Ashley's defining qualities. Those same values eventually led her to make another significant decision.





After spending 16 years with the same brokerage, she realized she had reached a point where growth required change “You hit a glass ceiling and you know it’s time to move on.” Through industry events and relationships with other high-performing agents, she found herself drawn toward a culture that emphasized collaboration, innovation, and authenticity. That led her to REAL, where she says she’s found the right fit.

Ashley is quick to point out that she doesn’t fit the stereotype many people have of a top-producing real estate agent, and she’s perfectly okay with that. “I think people are often surprised to learn that I’m actually a bit of an introvert and numbers nerd. My business has been built on being genuine, telling people the truth even when it’s not what they want to hear, and putting their best interests ahead of making a deal.” That philosophy has created a business fueled largely by referrals and repeat clients. “At the end of the day, I don’t want to be known as the agent who sold the most homes. I want to be known as the agent people trusted the most.”

Today, she sees a market that looks very different from the frenzy of recent years. “The market hasn’t slowed as much as it has become more discerning”. While buyers have become more selective, she says the right homes continue to attract strong interest. “Buyers are willing to pay a premium for the right home, but they’re no longer willing to overlook condition, pricing or location.” Buyers are placing greater emphasis on lifestyle than ever before.

“They want walkability, great schools, access to parks and restaurants, people are craving community again.” Helping clients discover that sense of community has become one of Ashley’s favorite parts of the business. “Nothing feels better than when a client calls to tell me their kids have found their tribe or Saturday morning walks through Alpharetta’s farmers market feels like home.”

Away from work, she’s deeply involved in animal rescue, regularly fostering dogs alongside her husband, her high school sweetheart, and their two teenage children. Their home has become something of a revolving door for foster puppies, rescue animals, and unexpected arrivals. “A stray somehow always finds us.” It’s a cause close to her heart. Rather than focusing on the overwhelming scale of pet overpopulation, she concentrates on individual lives. “One animal saved may not change the world,” she says, “but it changes the world for that animal.” Her family wouldn’t have it any other way.

Her dream? “Our family goal is to buy property and open a sanctuary farm.” She also encourages pet owners to spay and neuter their animals, saying it’s one of the most effective ways to reduce overpopulation. Between raising two teenagers, trying every new restaurant, work and learning golf, there’s rarely a quiet moment. “Somewhere along the way, I’ve become the person everyone calls when they need a restaurant recommendation. And I love it.”

Of course, after two decades in real estate, it’s impossible to talk with Lazarian without hearing a story or two.



But the one she remembers most wasn’t about a house at all. During a Saturday of showings, a young boy from one of her buyer families rounded a kitchen corner too quickly and struck the edge of a countertop, opening a severe wound across his forehead. Within seconds, panic filled the home. His mother began to faint. His father froze, unsure which family member needed him most. Without hesitation, Ashley grabbed towels from her car, applied pressure to the injury, helped organize the family, and sent them safely to the hospital before remaining behind to clean the home and arrange professional cleaners for the listing. Years later, she still keeps in touch with the family. “They didn’t buy that house,” she said. Today, that little boy is preparing to graduate from high school. He still carries a small scar on his forehead. It’s a story that says as much about her as any sales statistic ever could.

Ashley credits much of her growth to a willingness to learn and surrounding herself with people who challenge her. “I love to sit at tables with people that inspire me.” One book that made a lasting impact on her is ‘Who Not How’. “I think we can all get stuck in trying to do everything ourselves,” she said. “Letting someone else shine their light in the areas you might not shine as brightly can help you break through that glass ceiling.”

When asked what advice she’d give newer agents, her answer reflects the same authenticity that has guided her entire career. “Stop trying to be everything to everyone.” She believes the industry often pressures agents into becoming someone they’re not. Instead, she encourages them to lean into who they already are. “Authenticity is a lot less exhausting than pretending to be someone else.” Perhaps that’s why, after more than twenty years, Ashley Lazarian continues to grow. Not because she’s trying to become the biggest name in real estate. Because she’s focused on becoming the most trusted one. And in a business built on relationships, trust has a way of lasting far longer than any market cycle ever will. ➡

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L to R: Russell Bush, Tim Cook, Bruce Stockdale, Scott Trowbridge, Patrick Arabia, Dan Jourdan, Malia Majette, John Bradley

ATLANTA BASEMENT SYSTEMS

The Relationship Advantage: How One Vision Changed the Way Contractors Serve Real Estate Agents

PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

Every real estate agent knows the feeling.

A buyer has finally found the home they've been searching for. They're already talking about where the furniture will go and imagining holidays with family. The offer is accepted, everyone is excited, and the transaction is moving toward the finish line.

Then the home inspection report arrives.

The report is doing exactly what it was designed to do—document the home's condition—but for many buyers,

especially first-time homeowners, page after page of observations can quickly become overwhelming. Cracks in the foundation. Moisture in the crawl space. Signs of settlement. Water intrusion. What began as excitement can quickly become uncertainty.

Suddenly, the real estate agent's role changes.

They're no longer simply helping clients purchase a home. They're helping people navigate fear, emotion, and one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives.

For Patrick Arabia, that moment has always represented something more than a construction problem.

It represents an opportunity.

An opportunity to educate instead of intimidate.

An opportunity to replace uncertainty with understanding.

An opportunity to build trust.

That philosophy became the foundation for what is now known as the **Real**

Estate Response Team at Atlanta Basement Systems.

Patrick didn't arrive at that philosophy by accident.

Back in 2011, while working in the foundation repair industry, he noticed something that surprised him.

Many salespeople wanted nothing to do with real estate leads.

They considered them difficult. Time-sensitive. Too many people involved. Too much communication.

Patrick saw something completely different.

He recognized that REALTORS weren't looking for another contractor.

They were looking for a partner.

Someone who understood that repairing a home was only one part of the equation. Buyers needed confidence. Sellers needed clarity. Real estate agents needed someone who could explain structural issues honestly, recommend only what was necessary, and help everyone involved make informed decisions.

Most contractors expected real estate agents to adapt to their process.

Patrick believed contractors should adapt their process to better serve real estate agents.

It was a simple idea.

But it challenged decades of conventional thinking.

As Patrick refined that philosophy, another young professional was beginning his own journey in the foundation repair industry.

Scott Trowbridge came from a background in construction, remodeling, and specialty contracting. Understanding how homes were built came naturally to him.

Understanding real estate agents was something entirely different.

When Scott met Patrick in 2011, he quickly realized that foundation repair wasn't simply about concrete, steel, and engineering.

It was about people.

Patrick introduced Scott to something he had never considered before—the psychology of a real estate transaction.

Every buyer processes risk differently.

Every seller experiences uncertainty differently.

Every real estate agent is balancing the emotions of multiple people while trying to keep everyone moving toward the same goal.

For Scott, it completely changed the way he viewed the industry.

Less than a year after entering foundation repair, he discovered a passion for educating real estate agents.

"The more I taught, the more I learned," Scott says. "I realized I wasn't just teaching foundation repair. I was helping real estate agent understand how to navigate one of the most emotional parts of buying and selling a home."



Patrick Arabia

That realization also brought frustration.

Scott worked tirelessly building relationships with real estate agents. He taught continuing education classes, visited brokerages and earned the trust of agents throughout Metro Atlanta.

When those agents called the company, however, the experience wasn't always what Scott hoped it would be.

Too often, another salesperson would take the appointment, approach it like a traditional sales call and recommend repairs that created more fear than confidence.

"I would spend weeks or months building a relationship with an agent," Scott recalls. "Then someone else would run the appointment, create unnecessary pressure, and the relationship was lost. The agent thought

we were just another contractor trying to sell the biggest job, and many never called us again."

Patrick was the exception.

He approached every appointment differently.

He listened first.

He educated.

He explained.

Most importantly, he understood that one relationship built on trust was worth far more than one oversized repair proposal.

Patrick believed so strongly in that philosophy that he spent years trying to build it.

At multiple companies, he shared the same vision.

The response was usually the same.

Leadership appreciated the revenue that came from real estate agents' business, but they weren't willing to redesign their organizations around the needs of real estate agents. They wanted agents to fit into the contractor's process instead of creating a process that fit the realities of real estate.

Then everything changed.

When Patrick joined Atlanta Basement Systems, he found something he had been searching for throughout his career.

Leadership that believed in the vision.

Founder Larry Janesky and the leadership team didn't simply approve the idea.

They committed to it.

The Real Estate Response Team wasn't treated as another marketing program.

It became part of the company's culture.

Scheduling was reimagined.

The more I taught, the more I learned. I realized I wasn't just teaching foundation repair. I was helping real estate agents understand how to navigate one of the most emotional parts of buying and selling a home."

Communication improved.

Inspectors were trained differently.

Production became more flexible.

Every department embraced the same mission: helping real estate agents navigate structural concerns with honesty, urgency, and professionalism.

Today, Patrick serves as Director of the Real Estate Response Team, leading its continued growth across more than 30 Basement Systems markets throughout North America.

Here in Atlanta, that vision is carried forward by a dedicated team that exists for one purpose—to serve the real estate community.

Business Development Manager **Scott Trowbridge** focuses on education, relationship building, and helping brokerages better understand structural issues before they become obstacles.

Malia Majette, Real Estate Logistics Coordinator, keeps inspections, communication and scheduling moving efficiently during the critical due diligence period.

Real Estate Consultants **John Bradley**, **Tim Cook**, **Russell Bush**, **Dan Jourdan** and **Bruce Stockdale** work directly with real estate agents, buyers and sellers, applying the same philosophy Patrick envisioned more than a decade ago.

Every member of the team understands that success isn't measured by the size of a repair.

It's measured by the trust they leave behind.

That philosophy becomes evident in the field.

On one transaction, a buyer's agent requested an inspection after another contractor recommended more than \$8,000 in repairs for a crack in a poured concrete foundation wall. After evaluating the home, the Real Estate Response Team determined the crack was most likely caused during the original backfill process—not by ongoing structural pressure. Rather than recommending an unnecessary repair, the team explained that no work was required. For additional peace of mind, they suggested that a few carbon fiber straps could be installed in that isolated area if the buyer desired. The buyer ultimately purchased the home without performing any repairs.

On another property, a settling corner of a home's foundation prompted another contractor to recommend ten helical piers around the rear of the house. After studying the cracking patterns and evaluating the settlement, the Real Estate Response Team concluded that only two helical piers were necessary to stabilize the affected area. The revised recommendation saved the buyer thousands of dollars while still addressing the underlying problem.

Stories like these reinforce the philosophy that has guided Patrick from the very beginning.

"We're farmers, not hunters," Patrick says. "Hunters chase the next deal. Farmers plant seeds, build relationships, and invest in people over time. When you take care of people first, the business follows."

Perhaps that's why so many real estate agents continue to call the Real Estate Response Team year after year.

Not because they're looking for the biggest repair.

But because they're looking for someone they trust to tell them the truth.

In the end, that's the real relationship advantage.

Because while foundations can be repaired...

Trust must be earned. ▼

CONTACT US!

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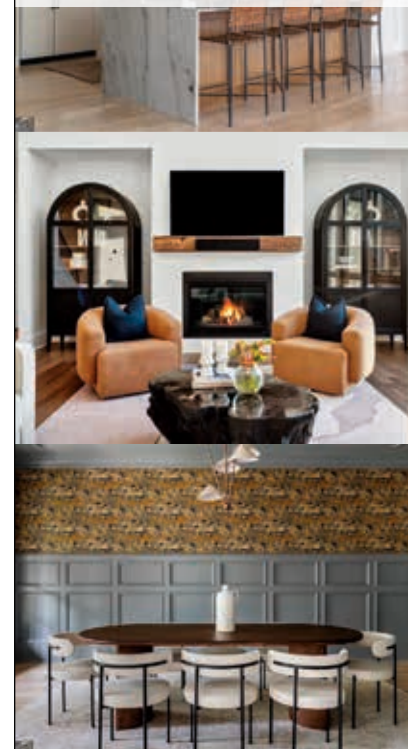
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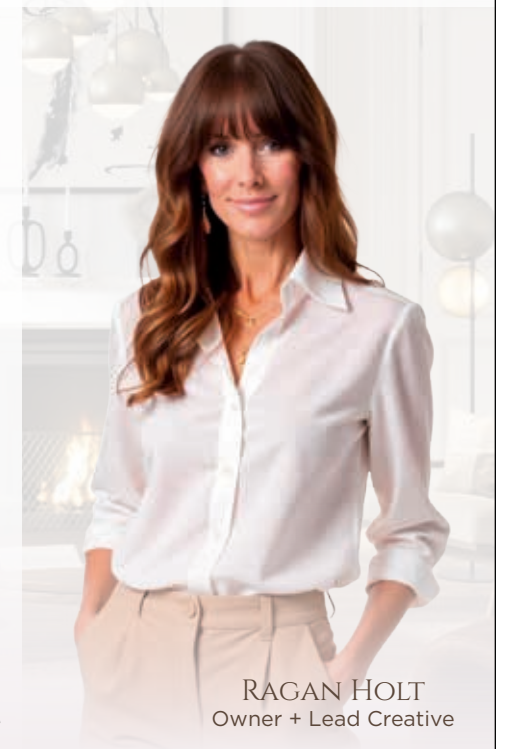
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Toast to the Top 2026

Hosted at Ferrari of Atlanta

PHOTOS BY VISUALLY SOLD

The best part of this business has never been the transactions, it's the relationships behind them.

For the first time, **Cherokee Real Producers and Greater Atlanta Real Producers** came together to host **Toast to the Top**, welcoming nearly 200 of North Atlanta's top-producing agents and Preferred Partners for an evening at Ferrari of Atlanta dedicated to celebrating excellence, strengthening relationships, and recognizing the professionals who continue to raise the bar in our market.

Surrounded by world-class automobiles, guests enjoyed live acoustic music, handcrafted cocktails, an elevated grazing table, and, most importantly, meaningful conversations with fellow industry leaders. It was a room filled with people who understand the commitment, consistency, and resilience required to perform at the highest level.

One of the evening's greatest strengths was bringing together agents and partners from two neighboring Real Producers communities. New relationships were formed, existing friendships were strengthened, and opportunities for collaboration naturally followed, reminding us that while we may serve different markets, we're all part of the same real estate community.

As Real Producers, our mission extends beyond recognizing production. We exist to create opportunities for the best in our industry to build authentic relationships that strengthen businesses, encourage collaboration, and ultimately serve clients at an even higher level.

A sincere thank you to Ferrari of Atlanta for their exceptional hospitality and to our Preferred Partners, whose



investment in this community continues to make experiences like this possible.

To everyone who joined us, thank you for making the evening memorable. Here's to continuing to raise the standard together.

We want to recognize the contributions of our preferred partners for their additional support alongside their contribution to the magazine to make this night possible.

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