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AUGUST 2026

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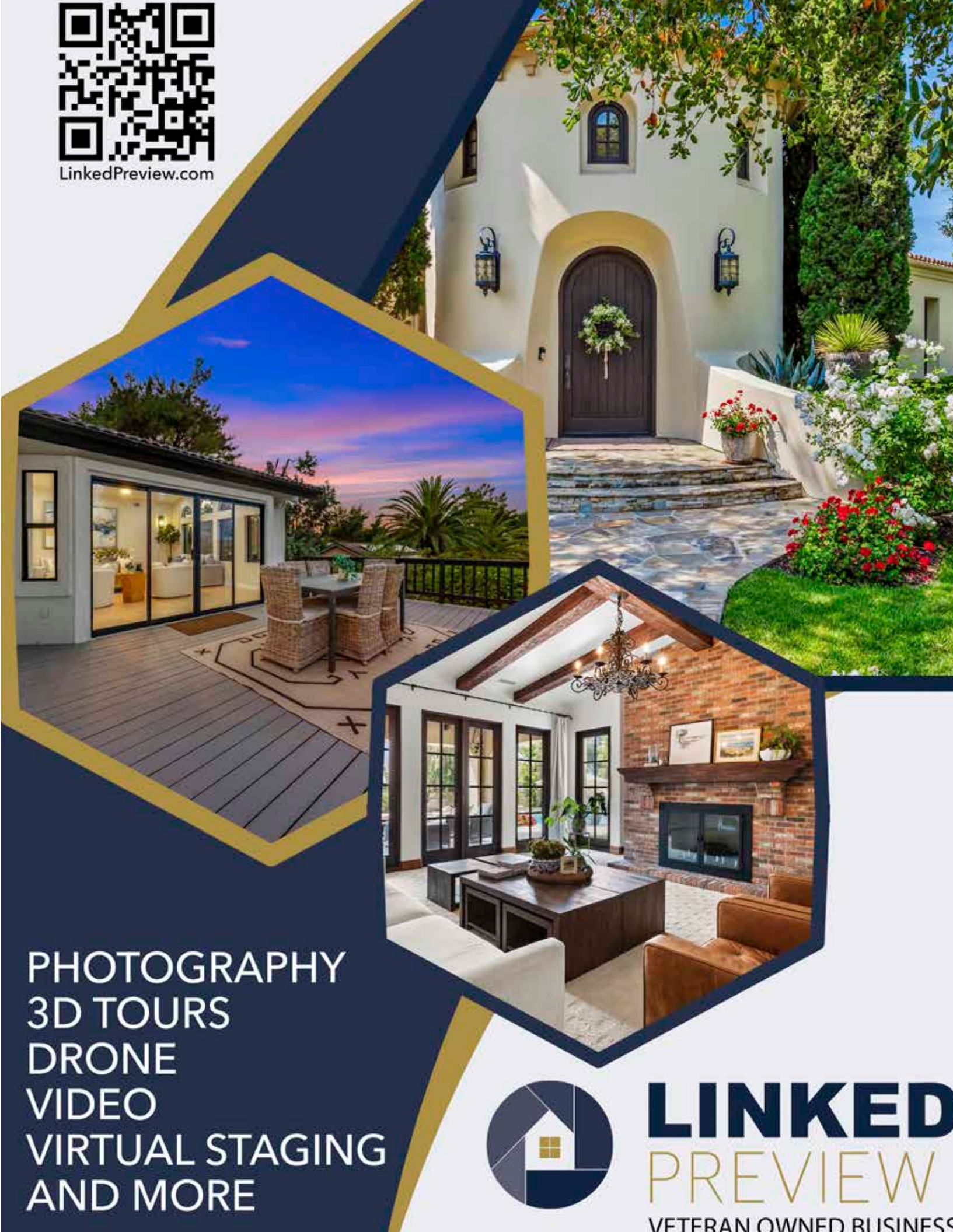
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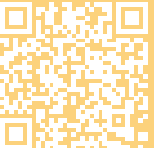
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SUMMER REFLECTIONS

As August brings the final weeks of summer, San Diego’s real estate market continues to demonstrate the resilience, opportunity, and lifestyle that make our region one of the nation’s most desirable places to live. As the season begins to wind down, the market remains active, driven by knowledgeable professionals who help buyers, sellers, investors, and homeowners navigate an ever-evolving landscape.

In this issue, we’re proud to feature the outstanding real estate agents and industry partners whose expertise and dedication strengthen our local market every day. Their commitment

to excellence continues to shape the communities that make San Diego such an exceptional place to call home.

As we close out the summer season, we hope this issue provides valuable insights, meaningful connections, and inspiration for a successful finish to the year. Thank you for being part of our community, and here’s to a strong August and an exciting season ahead.

Cheers!

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Marketing Without Systems is Expensive

BY MARYAM HABASHI- TRANSFORMATIONAL BUSINESS COACH



Maryam Habashi, M.Ed.
Certified Behavior Profiling Coach

Last month, we discussed the importance of building systems. Once those systems are in place, the next question becomes: How do we create greater visibility and attract more opportunities?

The answer is marketing and branding.

Unfortunately, many professionals invest heavily in marketing before establishing the systems needed to support growth.

The result? More leads. More activity. More frustration.

Marketing creates awareness. Sales creates conversion.

You can have a beautiful website, active social media presence, and strong advertising strategy, but if you lack a clear process for connection, follow-up, nurturing, and closing, opportunities often slip through the cracks.

The same applies to leadership.

A strong brand attracts talent, clients, and partnerships. A weak culture and poor leadership systems cause them to leave.

The opportunity is to align your marketing with your infrastructure.

When systems and branding work together, visibility increases, credibility grows, and conversions improve.



INFUSE system, provides professionals with a customized blueprint- building both the internal systems and external brand presence necessary to create sustainable growth.

Before increasing your marketing budget, ask yourself:

Do my systems support the opportunities my marketing creates?

Visibility without infrastructure rarely produces lasting results.

Maryam Habashi, M.Ed. Founder- INFUSE system
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2025



Claudia
Gongora-Murguia

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Transitioning into a new career after many years dedicated to family is a profound shift, but for Claudia Murguia, stepping into real estate felt like a beautiful awakening. Officially launching her career in June 2025 after passing her licensing exam on the first attempt, Claudia quickly became a powerhouse at the Coldwell Banker West Eastlake Office. Just months after getting licensed, she secured the #10 Top Producer spot in August 2025, followed by a stunning climb to the #3 Top Producer spot in November 2025. Recognized as this month's Rising Star, she represents the next generation of real estate professionals, driven, deeply empathetic, and uniquely equipped to guide clients through life's biggest transitions.

From "Everything Mom" to Real Estate Obsession

For over twenty years, Claudia's life was centered around her family. When she and her husband welcomed their third child, they made a joint decision for Claudia to put her professional ambitions on the back burner. During those years, she was happily anchored to her household and community.

"I've always been *that* mom," Claudia shares. "Team manager, parent advocate, room parent, Girl Scout troop leader, you name it. My life up until last year has been all about my children. "When her youngest neared high school, Claudia decided it was finally time to do something for herself. Entering the workforce after 20 years might sound intimidating, but Claudia found an immediate, undeniable spark. "I love it so much I don't even see it as work. I see it as 'me time'!" she laughs. "Truly, to say I'm obsessed with being a realtor is an understatement.

"That obsession is backed by a psychology degree and a sharp mind for business. Her husband is an established lender and mortgage broker and assisting him over the years gave her familiarity with the financial side of transactions. Claudia is analytical and loves books that break down human behavior like *Outliers* and inspiring narratives like *The Alchemist* are her personal favorites. This background



serves as a secret weapon when navigating the emotional highs and lows of an escrow.

Breaking Barriers and Creating Safe Circles

While Claudia has a sharp mind for data, her compassion is what truly sets her apart as a Rising Star. She has a deep commitment to families with special needs; in fact, about 75% of her clients have a family member with special needs living in the home. Claudia is passionate about helping others find a place of belonging whether it is creating lasting memories or finding a new home. Drawing on her experience as a former event planner, Claudia hosted a client appreciation party where she held a *Toy Story* 5, private movie showing. She hopes to create more events like this, where families feel safe, accepted, and free from judgment that can sometimes come in general public settings.

Claudia understands overcoming challenges firsthand. Her own childhood taught her how much stability housing can bring to a family. She watched her parents struggle to pursue their dreams because of language barriers, and those memories fuel her commitment to advocating for Spanish-speaking clients, so they are not left behind in the market.

“*Truly*, TO SAY I’M
OBSESSED WITH BEING
A REALTOR IS AN
UNDERSTATEMENT.”



Whether she is helping a Spanish-speaking family navigate complex paperwork or assisting a first-time buyer, making families realize they are worthy of homeownership is her ultimate reward. “The look on their faces when they shift from ‘No, not me, I can’t buy a home’ to ‘Wow, I can buy a house!’ is just priceless.”

Cultivating Loyalty and Shared Success

When she is not closing deals, Claudia finds solace in quiet time at home, organizing, and gardening. Her support system includes her biggest cheerleader, her husband and her three children: her oldest daughter just graduated from UC Berkeley, where she earned her degree in Environmental Science with an emphasis on Conservation Research and Sustainability and received special recognition in her program of study. Her second daughter manages a water sports rental shop at just 19 yrs old, while attending community college, and her youngest son who has been the most resilient in overcoming challenges truly inspiring to his parents and community is entering high school. Needless to say, Claudia’s pride and joy is her family!

Though she admits her sudden success is very humbling and can feel awkward to accept, especially to have the spotlight and talk about herself, Claudia has invaluable wisdom to share with fellow rising professionals. Her number one piece of advice centers on relationship-building and unwavering loyalty.

“Be a good listener and surround yourself with people who genuinely want the best for you,” Find a circle that cheers for you no matter what the size of the accomplishment. Claudia advises building a trusted network. For example, a go-to loan officer, title rep, and escrow team. Lean into their expertise to get you to the finish line. “Real estate may not have been Claudia’s original plan, but it has become the career she wishes she had discovered years ago. Looking ahead, she hopes to partner with her husband and build their own real estate team. Claudia Murguia is only getting started, proving that it is never too late to break barriers, reinvent yourself, and inspire others, one dream at a time. 🏡



You Only Have 2 CLIENTS



BY JEFF
CAMPBELL,
CALIFORNIA
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Buyers and Sellers

Buyers and Sellers are your first client. I group them together because they are treated and treasured equally.

They both have real estate desires, they want to trade cash for product, they want fair dealing and they want a closed escrow with concierge treatment *.

This is our business; closed escrows. We exist to be the service provider for people who need guidance and protection and mostly cannot do this process on their own. Yes, I get the hustle of finding clients- exposure AI farming networking open house reels social media pitches advertising marketing promotion bulk rate postcards CRM's sphere niches.... (I purposely excluded commas because like in real life, it all starts running together.) After the hustle to find the client, we must then serve the client

*I intentionally use the word concierge. If I started a new company today, (I have done this a few times), I would consider naming the company 'Concierge Realty.' Buyers and Sellers may or may not ask for this most elegant

treatment, but they certainly deserve it.

Great Co-Op Agents

Other great agents are your clients – they deserve concierge treatment.

“No, wait Jeff; they are my competition.”

You indeed may compete for a listing. I remember when my mom listed with my competitor, Potato Chip Realty, instead of me. I was hurt for a long time. Then I got real busy and the hurt went away. Hurt only endures when you have no other business.

Unless you work for a builder or never put your properties in the MLS, other great agents will sell more of your listings than you sell yourself. Thank heavens for other great agents. It is up to each of us to define a great agent.

I find great agents care more about both the buyer and seller and less about themselves. They have no concern about what Board you are a member of or what MLS you belong to and focus on ease, protection and the value of the transaction. These

REALTORS focus more on service and allow their reputation to be created by their actions, not their production numbers.

It is fulfilling to drop off a cake, gift card, have an annual client appreciation luncheon or put a client on a birthday mailer after you close escrow. Have you ever done the same for a great cooperating REALTOR after COE? If you extended gratitude to a co-op agent after closing, would that great agent forever remember you, respond to your offer first, let you be the first to know of something special, make special considerations for you to show their listing off-hours, or actually answer your incoming phone call?

Your two clients are 1) Buyers and Sellers, and 2) Great Co-op agents. I could not have been a part of the hundreds and hundreds of sales without treasured relationships with buyers and sellers and great co-op agents.

p.s. My mom actually listed with me and paid full commission.

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BY JOSEPH COTTLE
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Danielle Wolter didn't plan on home inspections. She'll tell you that herself.

"I fell into it," she says. "It's not like I knew home inspections was going to be my passion."

But it became one. Five years of doing the work has a way of clarifying things. And now, with her own brand, "Coast to Cactus," she's doing it entirely on her own terms.

The company launched with a team already in place—four certified inspectors, an office coordinator handling scheduling and client care, a business development rep in the field, and Danielle herself, who carries her inspector certification. Five years of relationships, processes, and hard-won reputation came with it. What changed is the autonomy.

"Doing things on our own enables us to do whatever we want," she says. "Which means we can do whatever our clients want."

That's the whole philosophy. Coast to Cactus built its identity around communication—specifically, the kind that doesn't send buyers spiraling. Home inspections have a way of alarming people. A long list of findings hits differently when you don't know which items are routine and which ones actually matter.

COAST to CACTUS PROPERTY INSPECTIONS



Danielle's team works to close that gap.

"Balancing it—making sure we're not freaking people out for no reason while also providing the information they need to make a good decision—is not always easy," she says. "But that's what we specialize in."

The motto captures it simply: *know more, stress less.*

That calculation matters as much for agents as it does for buyers. An inspection report read without context can unravel a deal. An agent left managing a panicked client loses time they don't have. Danielle's team understands both sides of the table—what buyers need to hear and how to say it in a way that keeps the process moving rather than derailing it.

Danielle is a military kid. She moved constantly growing up, and in 2004 after spending six months in Iraq, she came to San Diego and hasn't left. Her sister is in Georgia with a military husband, and her parents are in Virginia. Danielle planted herself here, found the beach, found the weather, and settled into the outdoor lifestyle the city makes easy—any excuse to be outside.

"It's got a laid-back vibe, but it still has all the fun stuff," she says.

What she didn't expect to find in San Diego was a life partner who would also become her actual partner. Kevin has been with her for fourteen years. About a year

and a half after she started in inspections, he left his job and joined her. He's since become their most requested inspector—the name clients ask for specifically. If you know Danielle out there, you probably know Kevin too.

She respects the hustle in the agents she works with. She says it plainly: she's a hustler herself. She knows what it takes to build something, and she sees the same thing in the top producers who run their businesses the way she runs hers. That mutual respect shapes how she approaches every partnership.

The five-year goal is to be the number one referred inspection company in San Diego. Commercial inspections are coming. More technology is coming. More refinements based on client feedback. All of it is coming—because now there's nothing standing between a good idea and making it happen. 🍷

"Doing things on our own enables us to do whatever we want. Which means we can do whatever our clients want."



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CARLOS ELIZONDO

Carlos Elizondo named his team ShoppingSDHouses with intention. Every element—the name, the logo, the colors, the culture, the way they work—was built to reflect one thing: San Diego.

“Every other company has been designed to generically sell real estate,” he says. “Ours has been designed to help people in San Diego.” The distinction matters to him. Every city is different, and every city requires its own kind of attention. San Diego—its color, its rhythm, its year-round openness—deserves a team built around it specifically. “It’s all been orchestrated around representing this very dynamic, beautiful city.”

Carlos came to real estate after running other businesses. Those were quieter operations—singular, mostly him and a handful of employees. Real estate offered something those couldn’t: the chance to be present at something that mattered.

“It’s like being part of someone’s graduation,” he says. “They get their house and we’re right there in that moment.” He saw immediately that it would be impactful, connected, fun. He draws a hard line there. “I won’t do anything in life that isn’t a great time. That doesn’t mean the hard work doesn’t exist, it just means the excitement and fun have to make up for it.”

BY JOSEPH
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When he started doing well, he didn't stay solo. The happiest people he'd ever met were in communities, so he built one.

ShoppingSDHouses travel together three to five times a year. They do trips, they do events, they show up for each other the way Carlos wants to show up for clients. He noticed early that most brokerages weren't doing any of that—agents at the same office barely talking. “Your business and your office are your village,” he says. “If the vibe is good, it doesn't feel like work.”

The client side gets the same energy. Key days—the celebration when a buyer gets their keys—run anywhere from \$1,000 to \$3,000. At year's end, the team rents out SeaWorld. The relationship doesn't stop when escrow closes. Carlos meets with clients one to five times a year, ongoing, indefinitely.

“We give everything back to the client, everything back to our agents, everything back to the city.”

He came into real estate seeing it as an industry of takers—people waiting to receive, unwilling to invest unless the outcome was guaranteed. He came in with the opposite model. Sponsored sports teams followed: an FC soccer club at the state stadium, a NASCAR driver, professional boxers, a slap fighter.



SUCCESS JUST MEANS COMPLETION. HAPPINESS IS HOW YOU FEEL DURING THE PROCESS. PEOPLE CONFUSE THOSE TWO THINGS.”



Eighteen vehicles wrapped in the team's colors. “Even if you don't like us,” he says, “you're gonna look at us.”

His philosophy has a name. He calls it BALLING—Be All IN. “If I have a dream, I don't roll back. I'll take it to failure. I'll take everything to zero.” He tells his agents the same thing when deals go sideways: bad days were always going to come. The mission doesn't change with them.

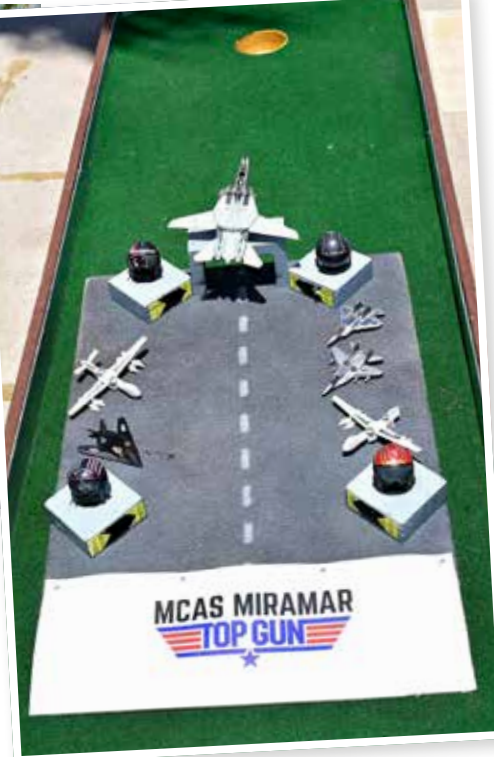
“Success just means completion. Happiness is how you feel during the process. People confuse those two things.”

Carlos is an 80's kid and makes no apologies for it—bright colors, bold moves, no hedging. He grew up before smartphones, and the aesthetic followed him into adulthood and straight into the brand. Outside the office, he's snowboarding, surfing, racing, at the gym. The family travels constantly: him, his wife Angelica, and their seven-year-old daughter Elizabeth, who goes everywhere they go.

“She's our little trail companion.”

Italy and Mexico keep pulling him back—the food first, then the culture. Machu Picchu is on the list for when Elizabeth can handle the hike. A Cybertruck handles the daily commute. A Huracán, wrapped in team colors, handles everything else.

He built a real estate team the way you'd build a community: all in, all color, all San Diego. 🏡



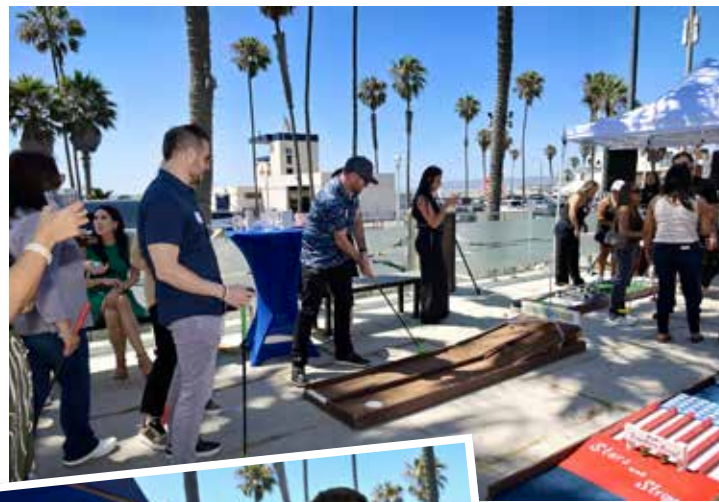
Metro South Real Producers

SUMMER PARTEE!

PHOTOS BY DON ANDERSON INSIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

We celebrated the start of Summer with a game of mini golf, courtesy of SD Pop Up Mini Golf, at the lovely OB Surf Lodge in Ocean Beach! It was a picture-perfect day, and we would like to thank our event sponsors, Foundation Escrow, Forward Mortgage/Renovate San Diego, and Ginder Law Group, for sponsoring this great event! Thanks to Tommy Kreation and Insight Photography for photography & video services.







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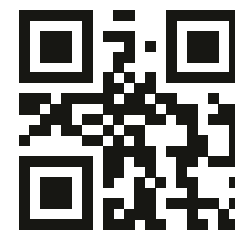


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