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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



BY ANDREW
REGENHARD

Dear Real Producers and
Valued Partners,

I always look forward to August.

There's something about this time
of year that feels like everyone
is getting back into rhythm.
Vacations are wrapping up,
schedules are filling back up, and
our Real Producers community
starts coming together again.

That's why I'm especially excited
for what's ahead this month.

On **August 13th**, we'll be
gathering at the beautiful
Gulfshore Playhouse in Naples.
If you haven't been there yet,
you're in for something special.
Then, on **August 27th**, we'll head
to the incredible **Sidney & Berne
Davis Art Center** in Fort Myers,

another venue that perfectly
reflects the caliber of the people
who make up this community.

If you haven't RSVP'd yet,
consider this your reminder!

One of my favorite parts of
Real Producers is seeing the
connections that happen
beyond these pages. I've
watched introductions turn
into partnerships, referrals,
friendships, and lasting business
relationships. Thank you to
everyone who helps make this
possible through your support,
partnership, and commitment to
one another.

I can't wait to catch up with so
many of you this month. If you
see me at either event, don't
hesitate to come say hello. I

always enjoy putting faces to
names and hearing what's new in
your business and your life.

See you soon!

Very respectfully yours,

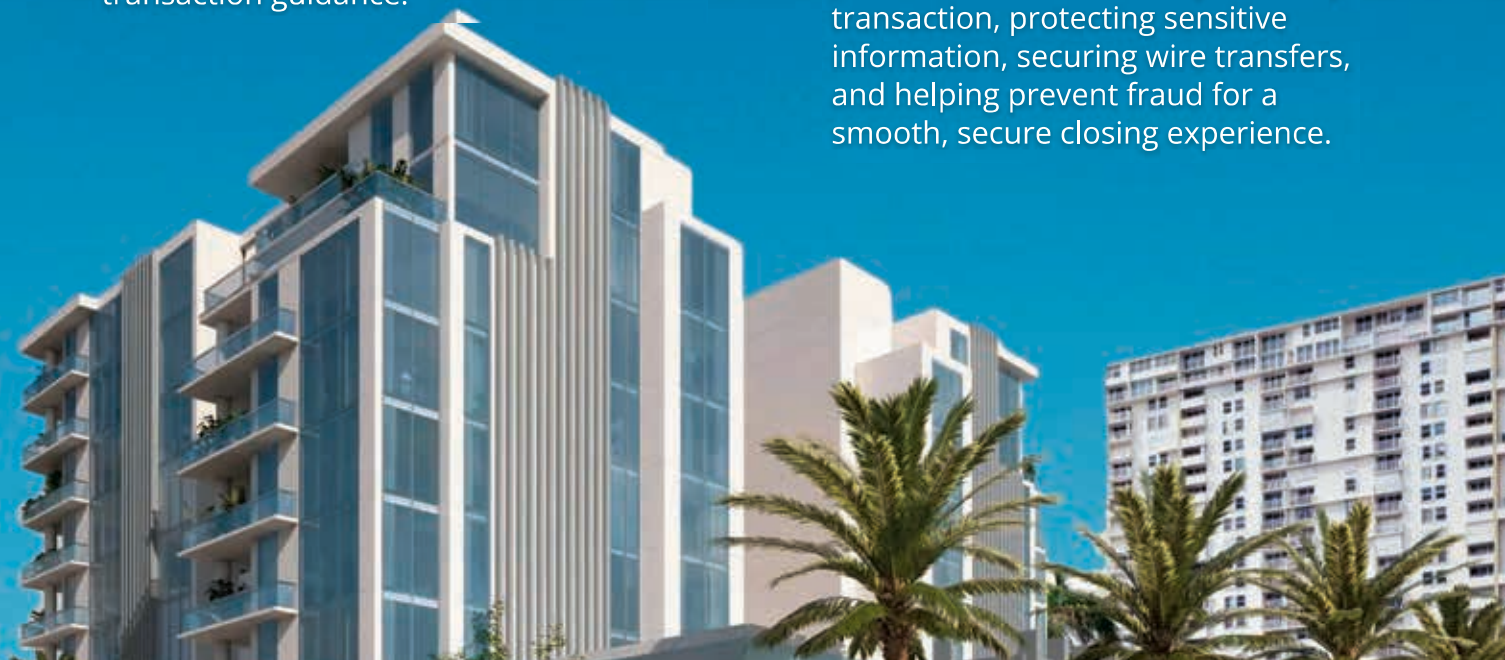


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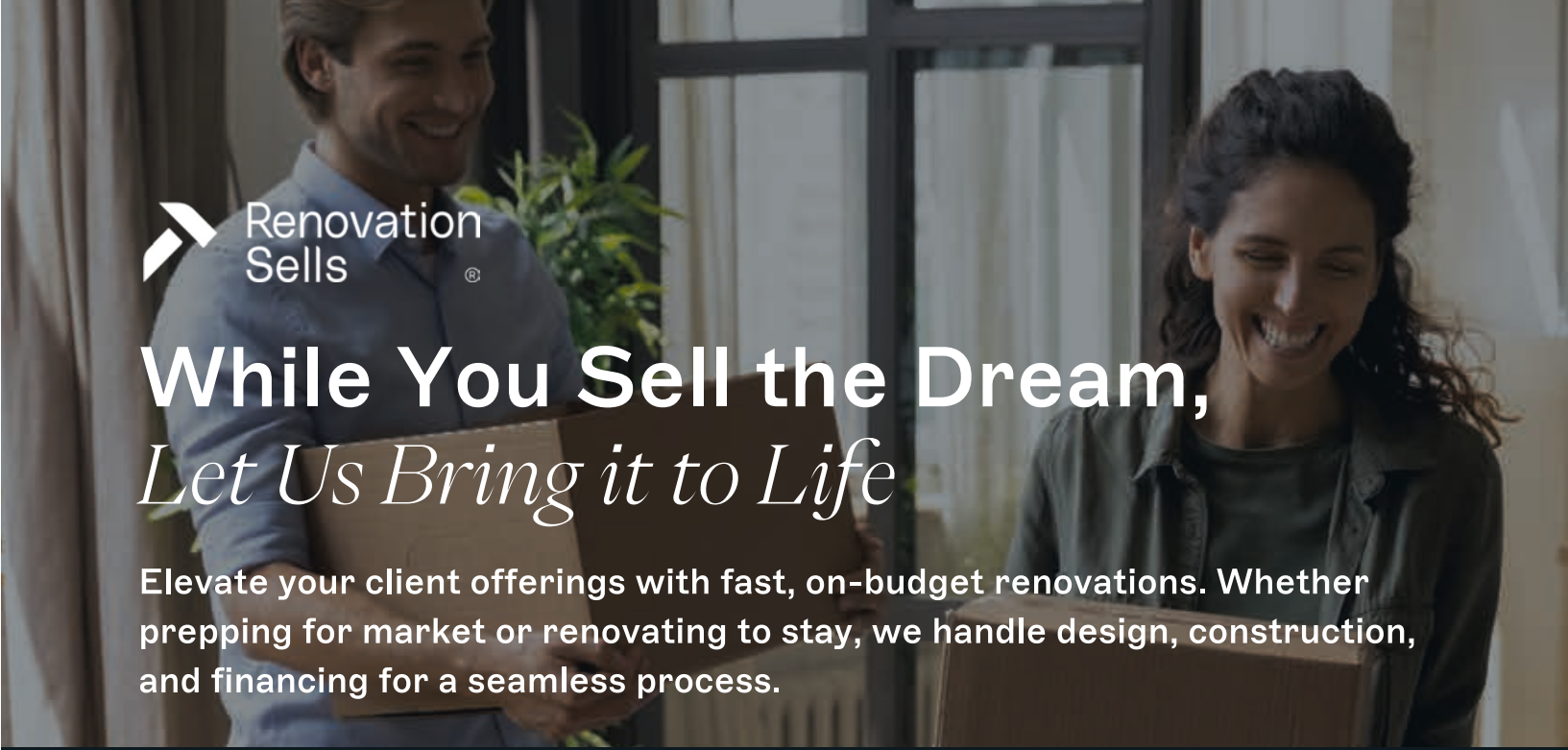
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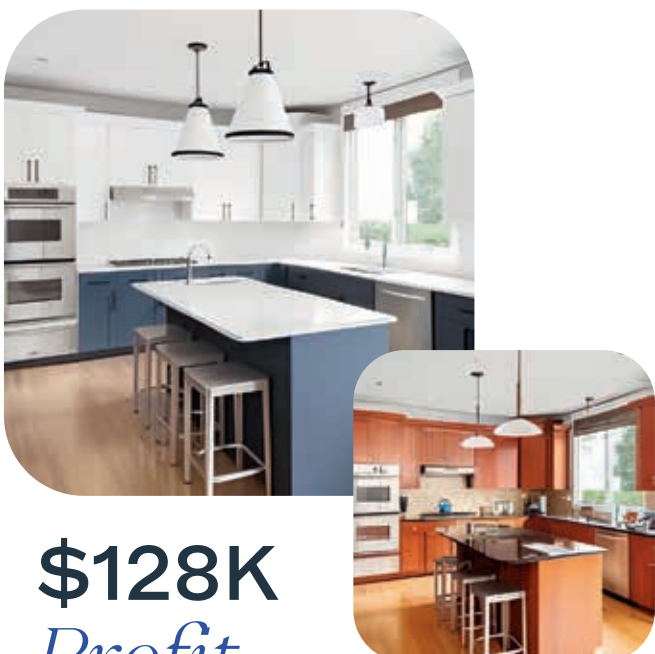
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Dream Big.
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**LET TIME
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ADVANTAGE.**

BY MICHAEL DILL

Every successful business starts the same way—not with a product, customer, or funding, but with an idea.

Every company you've ever admired began as a thought in someone's imagination. Long before there was a business plan or marketing strategy, there was someone willing to think beyond what already existed.

Unfortunately, many business owners lose that ability as their companies grow. They become consumed by meetings, emails, customer issues, payroll, and operational challenges. Before long, they're reacting instead of creating.

That's one of the greatest dangers of entrepreneurship: when you're constantly working in the business, it's easy to stop dreaming about what the business could become.

The most successful leaders never lose that perspective. They continue to dream big—but they also understand

that dreams alone never build businesses.

Every Great Business Starts with Imagination

One of the greatest assets every entrepreneur possesses is imagination—the ability to see possibilities before anyone else does.

Every invention, every breakthrough, and every successful company existed in someone's mind before it existed in reality. Someone imagined a better way, saw an opportunity others couldn't, and dared to think differently.

As children, we're encouraged to imagine. Then somewhere along the way, we're told to be realistic, practical, and play it safe.

Entrepreneurship requires the opposite mindset.

Business owners must be dreamers. They have to envision products that

don't yet exist, cultures that inspire employees, and businesses that create opportunities for others.

Without imagination, innovation disappears. Without vision, businesses simply maintain the status quo.

Dreaming big isn't fantasy—it's giving yourself permission to think beyond your current circumstances.

Big Dreams Require Tactical Thinking

Imagination alone isn't enough. Every dream eventually must become a plan.

Some people spend years dreaming but never execute. Others jump into action without thinking strategically. Neither approach produces consistent results.

Successful businesses combine vision with execution.

Once you know where you want to go, break the vision into practical steps:

- What needs to happen first?
- What resources are required?
- Who should be involved?
- What milestones will measure progress?

Large goals become achievable when they're broken into manageable pieces. That's tactical thinking.

Rather than becoming overwhelmed by the size of the vision, focus on executing the next right step. Over time, those small steps compound into significant progress.

Progress Beats Perfection

One of the biggest misconceptions in business is that successful companies

create one perfect strategy and simply follow it.

That rarely happens.

The best organizations are constantly testing, learning, and improving. Marketing campaigns get refined. Sales processes evolve. Leadership improves through feedback. Systems become better through repetition.

Successful business owners don't become discouraged when things don't go as planned.

They learn. They adapt. They improve.

Execution isn't about perfection. It's about progress.

Time Is More Powerful Than Most People Realize

We live in a world that celebrates quick wins and overnight success. Real business doesn't work that way.

Most people overestimate what they can accomplish in a month and underestimate what they can accomplish in five or ten years of consistent effort.

Success compounds.

Just like money grows through compound interest, so do habits, skills, relationships, leadership abilities, and business systems.

Small improvements repeated consistently create extraordinary results.

Time becomes your ally when you commit to steady progress instead of chasing instant results.

Consistency Always Beats Intensity

Many entrepreneurs work in cycles—highly motivated for a few weeks, making progress, then burning themselves out.

Sustainable growth doesn't work that way.

Businesses are built through consistency:

Show up every day. Execute the plan. Review the results. Make adjustments. Repeat.

The goal isn't to have one extraordinary day. The goal is to build extraordinary habits.

Final Thoughts

Success isn't built on dreaming alone, nor is it built solely on hard work.

It comes from combining three powerful ideas:

Dream big enough to imagine possibilities beyond your current reality.

Think tactically enough to turn those dreams into practical action.

Trust that time is working in your favor as you consistently improve, refine, and execute.

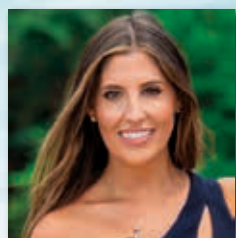
Extraordinary businesses aren't built overnight. They're built one decision, one improvement, and one day at a time.

Keep dreaming. Keep planning. Keep adjusting.

Every small step you take today is laying the foundation for the business you'll be proud of tomorrow.



COACH MICHAEL DILL is an Award-Winning Certified Business Coach, global speaker, and published author. He is a proud Action Coach Franchise partner as well as the President of Power & Ice Wealth Creation a strategic leadership company that works with business owners, leaders, teams, and entrepreneurs to both develop a systematized and structured organization while accelerating their mindset, efficiencies, and effectiveness to grow both personally and professionally to achieve extraordinary results. He brings more than 40 years of business and entrepreneurial experience in his leadership, team training, and mentoring practice.



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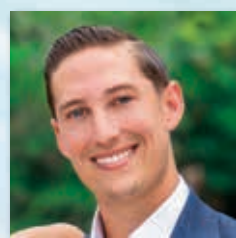
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BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY LACASATOUR

Hope MOORE

GIVING DREAMS AN ADDRESS

“My clients have nicknamed me ‘The iron fist in the velvet glove,’ and I wear that proudly,” Hope Moore grins. “I will advocate for my clients with everything I have, but always with grace and professionalism.”

Few people arrive in real estate with a résumé quite like Hope Moore’s. Over the course of her life, she has worked for IBM across North America, lived in Tokyo, founded a nonprofit, built a successful winery in Washington State, and moved more than 35 times.

Her pivot to real estate wasn’t so much a reinvention as a culmination. Today, the Broker Associate with Serhant Naples and co-founder of The Moore Group has built a thriving 100% referral-based business, closing nearly \$12.9 million across 11 transactions last year while earning a reputation as a fierce advocate for clients throughout Southwest Florida.

All Roads Led Here

Long before she ever represented a buyer or seller, Hope had spent a lifetime preparing for the role without realizing it. Born in Beacon, New York, she later moved to North Carolina, earning her degree from the University of North Carolina before studying finance at the Wharton School. She spent 16 years with IBM as a systems engineer before moving into brand management and sales, experiences that sharpened her business acumen and taught her how to listen carefully, solve problems, and build relationships.

Life eventually carried her beyond the corporate world. A five-year relocation to Tokyo sparked a deep commitment to philanthropy working with Refugees International Japan, while a later chapter in Washington State saw her launch a successful winery.

“I followed in my grandfather’s footsteps and became a winemaker for 13 years,” she shares. “I built a winery that blended my entrepreneurial background with my passion for philanthropy — the business literally funded my giving back.”

The move that changed everything, however, had nothing to do with business. In 2014, Hope’s mother’s health began to decline in Naples while her son Geoff had also established roots there. Faced with a choice between continuing the life she had built in Washington or being closer to the people she loved most, Hope didn’t hesitate.

“When it comes down to it, no business, no career, no achievement means more than family,” she emphasizes. “That decision was scary, but it was also one of the clearest I have ever made.”

Once she arrived in Naples, her mother’s dear friend and longtime Realtor Margaret Hutchinson encouraged Hope to consider real estate. Margaret recognized something Hope had overlooked herself: after buying and selling properties for decades and

moving more times than most, she understood the process from a perspective few agents ever would.

“Along the way, I also developed a genuine passion for design, custom construction, and interior renovation,” Hope notes. “I’ve always believed that vision is ‘the art of seeing what is invisible to others.’”

“From the moment I stepped into this business, I went 100-percent full time, and it felt like where I was always supposed to be,” she continues. “All roads led me here.”

The Secret Sauce

Ask Hope what sets her business apart and her answer comes quickly: relationships always trump numbers. Every transaction she closed last year originated from referrals, repeat relationships, or connections she has carefully cultivated over time. To her, that effort isn’t just a source of business, it’s a reflection of consistent actions.





“People don’t refer someone they don’t trust completely,” she points out.

The trust she works tirelessly to earn is developed through education as much as advocacy. Hope believes one of her most important responsibilities is helping clients fully understand the facts behind every decision they make.

“Real estate is an emotional experience by nature — you’re talking about people’s homes, their dreams, their futures,” she offers. “But emotion can be costly.”

“My job is to ground every decision in facts, in data, and in clarity, so that when we get to the closing table, my clients feel confident, not just hopeful.”

That approach helps explain why clients frequently stay in touch years after closing and call her up all the time for advice. Whether she’s helping coordinate a move, solving an unexpected problem, or answering questions unrelated to an active deal, Hope views every interaction as an opportunity to strengthen a relationship rather than complete a task.

It’s also why clients often describe her as someone who goes far beyond what is expected.

“At the end of the day, my tagline says it all: I’m here to *give their dream an address*,” she affirms.

Philanthropy With Gusto

For 23 years, Hope devoted countless hours to Make The Dash Count, a Washington-based foundation dedicated to teaching youth the importance of philanthropy and financial literacy. The organization’s name was inspired by a simple but powerful concept: the dash between the dates on a headstone represents everything we do with the time we’ve been given.

It is impossible to discuss that mission without discussing her late mother, whose influence remains deeply woven into Hope’s character. Even years after her passing, the lessons she imparted continue to guide everything her daughter does.

“My mother liked to say ‘Every no is a future yes’ — a reminder to never be discouraged, because timing is everything in this business and in life,” Hope shares.



“Real estate is an emotional experience by nature — you’re talking about people’s homes, their dreams, their futures. BUT EMOTION CAN BE COSTLY.”



“Another one, which may be the one I hold closest, is ‘The only thing someone can’t take away from you is your integrity.’”

“That one has guided every business decision I have ever made, from IBM to the wine industry to real estate,” she adds. “When I reflect on it, my mother didn’t just give me great sayings — she gave me my entire philosophy for life and for business.”

Hope’s mother lived long enough to see her daughter find her footing in real estate and to watch The Moore Group begin taking shape alongside her grandson, Geoff. That memory remains especially meaningful today as Hope continues building a business rooted in solid relationships and integrity.

On The Horizon

These days, Hope’s greatest motivation centers on legacy. Not necessarily the kind reflected in rankings, but the kind built through a reputation that endures. While she and Geoff operate their own books of business, they

work side-by-side closely as The Moore Group, supporting one another while creating something larger than either could build alone.

Outside the office, Hope enjoys spending time at the beach, growing orchids, and even designing websites, mostly for friends who own small businesses. Giving back remains an important part of her life as well, whether through charitable sponsorships or future opportunities to support causes she cares about. Most of all, she treasures time with family and friends, grateful that the decision she made more than a decade ago brought her closer to the people who matter most.

In many ways, the future looks remarkably similar to the values that have guided her all along.

“As my mother would say, ‘Life is not a dress rehearsal,’” Hope concludes. “I am focused on growing The Moore Group, giving every client a dream worth addressing, and leaving something behind that truly outlasts any single transaction.”

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FINISH

The Finish Line That Never Arrives

“Enough is a decision, not an amount.” - Brené Brown

One of the greatest privileges of my work is sitting across from remarkable people who have achieved goals they once only dreamed about. They’ve built thriving businesses, earned recognition in their industries, created financial stability, and become respected leaders in their communities.

BY CARLENE MARIE



CARLENE MARIE is an author, keynote speaker, and Master Mindpower Coach who helps leaders, high achievers, and organizations release self-doubt, reclaim their worth, and lead with greater confidence, resilience, and clarity. Her debut book, *Enough Already: Release Self-Doubt, Reclaim Your Worth, Remember Your Light*, debuts in September 2026.

Yet many quietly share a similar sentiment. “*I thought I’d feel different by now.*”

Perhaps you’ve experienced it too. You reach a goal, close the deal, earn the promotion, hit the milestone, or accomplish something you’ve worked toward for months or even years. For a moment, there’s excitement and satisfaction. Then, almost without noticing, your attention shifts to the next objective.

The next listing. The next quarter. The next accomplishment. The next finish line.

Researchers call this *hedonic adaptation*; our brain’s remarkable ability to adapt to positive change. What once felt extraordinary eventually becomes normal. The achievement that once seemed life-changing simply becomes part of everyday life.

While this is a natural part of being human, it can create a subtle challenge for high achievers. If our sense of fulfillment is always tied to the next accomplishment, we can spend our lives chasing a feeling that never quite arrives.

The issue isn’t ambition. Healthy ambition allows us to grow, contribute, and pursue meaningful goals. The challenge begins when we postpone **feeling enough** until some future moment.

“*I’ll feel successful when...*” “*I’ll relax after...*” “*I’ll enjoy life once...*” The finish line keeps moving. Years ago, I worked toward a goal that consumed much of my focus and energy. I was convinced that once I reached it, everything would feel different. When that day finally arrived, it was meaningful and

rewarding. Yet only days later, my mind had already begun searching for what came next.

I hadn’t learned how to pause long enough to receive what I had achieved. Many of us become so accustomed to striving that we rarely stop to acknowledge how far we’ve come.

This summer, I’d like to offer you a gentle invitation. Instead of asking, “*What’s next?*” Ask, “*What is already here?*” What growth have you created? What challenges have you overcome? What relationships have you strengthened? What prayers have been answered that you once carried in your heart?

Research consistently shows that practices such as gratitude and reflection increase well-being, resilience, and overall life satisfaction. More importantly, they help us experience our lives while we’re living them instead of constantly racing toward the next milestone.

One simple practice I often recommend is keeping a **wins journal**. At the end of each week, write down three things you’re proud of, no matter how small. Over time, this simple habit trains your brain to recognize progress instead of focusing solely on what’s still unfinished.

The truth is, there will always be another goal to pursue and another mountain to climb. But life isn’t found only at the summit.

Sometimes the greatest gift is learning to pause on the trail, look around, and recognize the beauty of where you already are.

You may discover that the fulfillment you’ve been chasing has been waiting for you there all along.

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CHRISTOPHER 'CHRIS' KAGAN

5
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AIR



BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY NEW FRAME PHOTOGRAPHY

“The average person doesn’t know much about how air conditioning works... So it’s easy for a technician to say anything to a consumer,” Chris Kagan points out. “Unless that consumer calls around and gets a second opinion, they can easily get taken advantage of. That’s a prime example of what we want to prevent at 5 Star Air.”

That industry reality was what led Chris to launch 5 Star Air, a family-owned HVAC and refrigeration company serving Lee, Collier, and Monroe Counties. Built on a straightforward promise to do right by the customer, the company has steadily grown over the past six years by offering something that feels increasingly rare in the industry: transparency, integrity, and competitive pricing.

Seeing The Problem Up Close

Born and raised in Fort Myers, Chris followed a path that most wouldn’t expect to lead into HVAC. After attending Yale for undergrad and Valparaiso for law school, he built a career as a successful licensed attorney, a profession he still practices today.

But it was through that lens of reviewing situations, understanding risk, and recognizing when people were being taken advantage of that Chris began to notice disturbing patterns within the HVAC world that didn’t sit right.

“5 Star Air was originally started to provide honest and fair HVAC services after we had multiple dealings with less than honest contractors,” Chris explains. “I also chose this industry because there was a lot of mistrust in the industry

as a whole and a lot of bad business practices.”

Rather than ignore it, Chris chose to step in and create a better alternative. One grounded in fairness, with a clear intention behind every decision.

“From day one, I wanted to do the right thing and treat customers the way I would want my own grandmother treated,” he adds.

A Different Way Of Doing Business

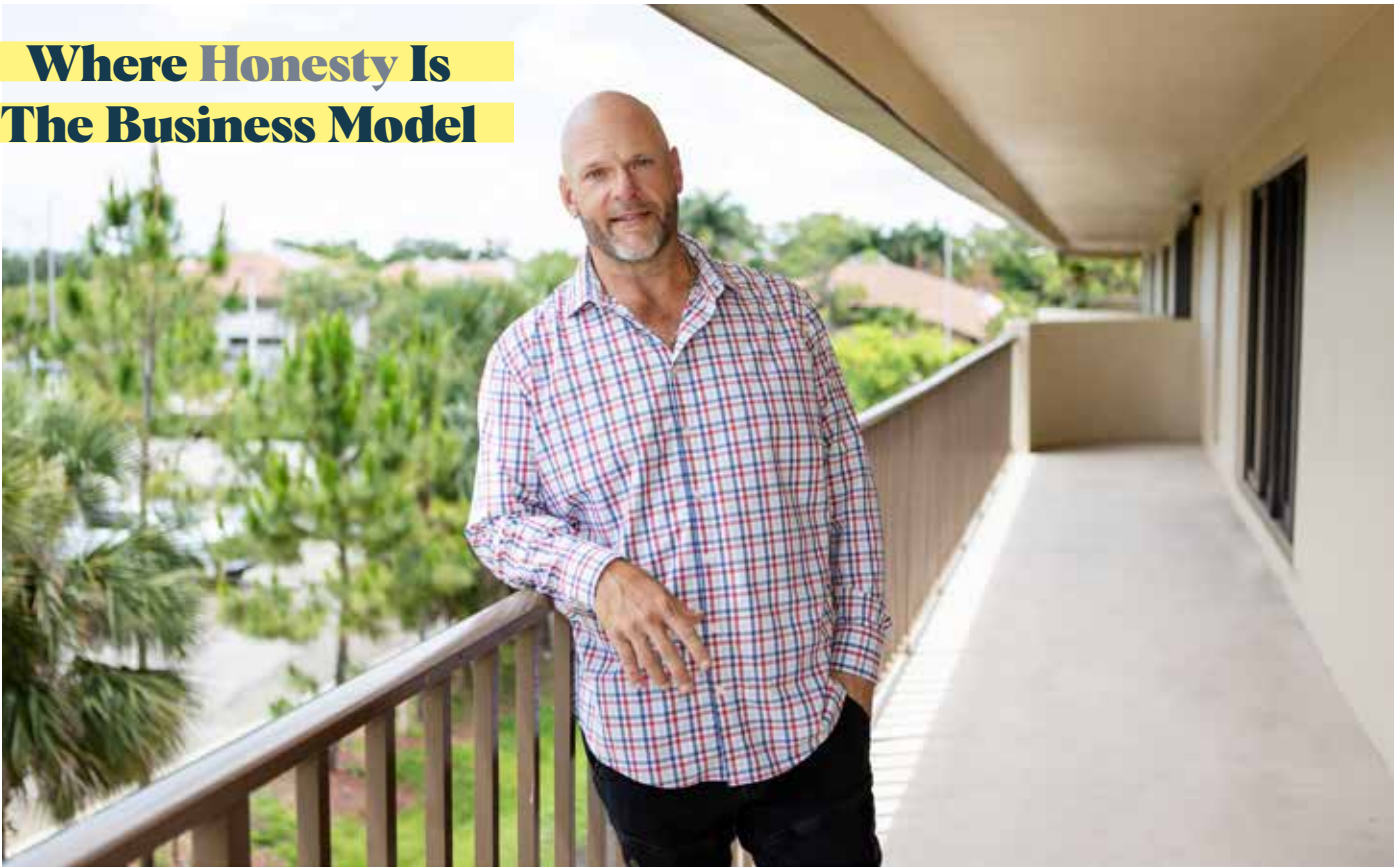
From the beginning, Chris structured 5 Star Air in a way that directly addresses many of the issues he saw in the HVAC industry. Instead of operating as a sales-driven company, the business is built around skilled repair technicians who focus on solving problems rather than upselling unnecessary services.

“Our techs are highly skilled, hourly team members; they are not on commission or 1099 subcontractors,” Chris notes.

That distinction matters more than most consumers realize. Without commission-based incentives, technicians are free to recommend only what is actually needed, which naturally keeps costs down and builds long-term trust with clients.

“When you see companies that offer a free tune up, beware, because it costs them money to send someone skilled and it’s questionable how they are going to charge for those ‘free’ services,” Chris cautions. “By comparison, our team doesn’t ever sell you something you don’t need, we are just there to fix the problem.”

Where Honesty Is The Business Model



“We will take exceptional care of Realtors by taking exceptional care of their clients.”



That same approach extends to pricing. By operating as a volume-based contractor and maintaining lower overhead, 5 Star Air is able to offer competitive pricing that stands out in the market, including equipment options that are often significantly lower than industry averages.

“What sets us apart from our competitors is the quality of workmanship and our volume- style pricing,” Chris affirms. “We are currently offering a new 3-ton, 15.2 SEER Trane unit for \$6,999!”

Reliable Resource For Realtors

For Realtors, having a dependable, honest HVAC partner is crucial during inspections or when unexpected issues arise mid-transaction. Chris

understands that trust and timing are everything in those moments, and he’s built his business to support all parties’ credibility.

“We will take exceptional care of Realtors by taking exceptional care of their clients,” he emphasizes.

That commitment to care shows up in how the company handles service calls, communicates with clients, and stands behind its work. With a 4.9 Google rating across more than 350 reviews, 5 Star Air has built a solid reputation that agents can confidently recommend.

“We let our Google reviews speak for themselves,” Chris continues. “If we ever mess up, we’ll take it all the way to the finish line and own it. As a business

owner and an attorney, I take that responsibility very seriously.”

Beyond service, the company also brings added value through prestigious partnerships. As a qualified Mitsubishi Diamond Dealer and a proud partner with TRANE, 5 Star Air is able to offer extended warranties and better pricing to customers, giving agents another layer of confidence when recommending solutions.

The result is a straightforward, no-pressure experience that helps keep transactions moving forward while protecting the client from unnecessary costs or surprises.

“We are also proud to do government work and we just finished the Hemingway

House down in Key West,” Chris offers.

Family And Future Horizon

Beyond running two businesses, Chris keeps

life centered around his loved ones. He met his wife Danielle 30 years ago, and together they are raising three awesome kids — Mason, 13, Madeleine, 10, and Hudson, 9 — while Danielle also works for the Community School of Naples.

In his off hours, you’ll likely find Chris traveling, golfing, or simply hanging out with his brood, balancing a busy professional life with the people who matter most.

At the same time, he remains deeply connected to the community, giving back through both his legal work and his business while supporting local events and causes whenever possible.

Looking ahead, Chris sees both challenges and opportunities within the industry. As private equity firms continue to acquire smaller companies and sales-driven models become more common, he believes the need for honest, service-first

businesses will only continue to grow.

“I am worried that PE will focus more on what they can make vs. what is best for the customer,” he says. “But the good news for us is that we are reasonably priced and I have been conscious of that from day one.”

“Our business is growing at the moment,” Chris continues. “When Florida made the gas switch from 410A over to 454B for efficiency, we were Rheem Pro partners at the time and the pricing kept going up. So I set up a meeting with TRANE and asked them to match the pricing and they said ‘yes’... That decision has allowed us to offer TRANE products at a price that is one of the lowest on the market.”

With steady growth, strong partnerships, skilled technicians, and a pricing model designed to remain accessible, Chris is excited where 5 Star Air is headed.

“I love helping others, and by doing that, we get to keep an entire industry honest,” he concludes with a grin. ▀

To learn more about 5 Star Air or schedule an appointment, visit www.5starair.com or call 239-282-2222 today!





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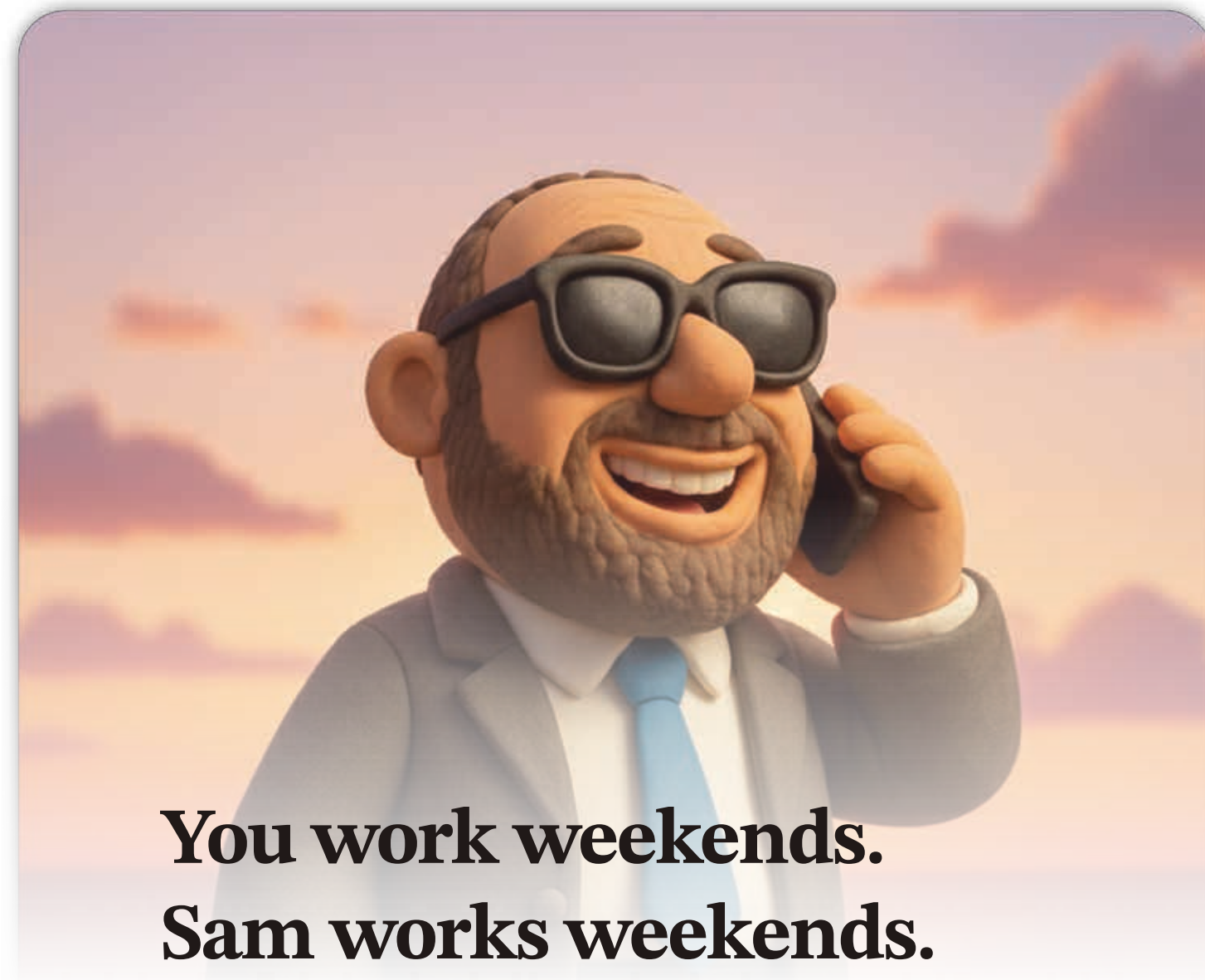
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Jessica "Jess" Higdon

BY JESS WELLAR
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JESSICA "JESS" HIGDON

understands luxury real estate is rarely just about the house itself. More often, it is about the life people hope to build once they move in. Four years into the business, the Naples luxury agent and founder of The Higdon Team with Realty One Group MVP has quickly built a reputation for blending high-level branding, concierge service, and deeply personal client relationships into a boutique experience that feels far more human than transactional.

"As real estate agents, we get access to the intimacy of a family that no one else is privileged to see," Jess reflects. "We get to see your home and the way you live, and we are privy to how you want to spend the rest of your life and create memories with your family."

Always Drawn To The Business

Originally from Chagrin Falls outside Cleveland, Ohio, Jess eventually relocated to Naples with her family. She later studied at both the University of Central Florida and Florida Gulf Coast

University, where she completed her marketing degree.

For nearly a decade, she and her husband Ray ran a successful Inc. 5000 marketing, sales, and consulting company while simultaneously investing in luxury real estate themselves. But long before the business success, Jess says real estate had quietly fascinated her.

"I've loved real estate since I was a little girl," Jess shares. "I used to beg my mom to take me to open houses when I was just 9 years old."

Initially, getting licensed was simply a practical move to help sell her family's investment properties. But as friends and acquaintances increasingly asked for help with their homes, Jess discovered she enjoyed the work much more than expected.

Ironically, she admits real estate did not immediately feel like a natural fit. Coming from entrepreneurship and

investing, Jess worried about whether she would enjoy working so closely with the public until she realized she could intentionally shape both her business and client experience around the kinds of relationships she valued most with a little discernment.

"Once I figured that out, it became much more fun and more of a passion than a job," she grins.

Jess also credits respected Naples agents Lynn Hurley and Jari Philson for helping her better understand both the luxury concierge side of the business and the transactional logistics early in her career. Last year alone, she closed nearly \$31 million across just eight transactions while simultaneously launching her own team.

The Concierge Difference

Jess officially started The Higdon Team last November with a very intentional vision: create a boutique luxury experience where clients feel genuinely cared for rather than processed through



“
WE ARE VERY
FOCUSED ON
SERVING THE
ENTIRE PERSON,
NOT JUST THE
TRANSACTION.”

a high-volume machine. Her team includes Lauren Protano as co-listing and client concierge, Marisa Jordan overseeing operations, and Keri Herryty serving as business strategist and consultant while additional luxury advisors are currently being interviewed.

“We are very focused on serving the entire person, not just the transaction,” Jess elaborates. “We’re all very down to earth and approachable but also professional luxury advisors.”

Their helpful culture shapes nearly every aspect of the client experience. From coordinating relocation details and concierge services to carefully branding a luxury property’s story online, Jess believes the little details are often what separate average service from an exceptional one.

“Our team goes above and beyond, and our slogan ‘Let’s do this right...’ encapsulates the entire wellbeing of each client, not just the real estate transaction,” she emphasizes. “We are truly a luxury experience.”

With her marketing and branding background, Jess approaches listings differently than many traditional luxury agents. Rather than simply marketing house features, her team focuses heavily on storytelling, emotional connection, and creating a distinct identity for each property. That strategy has translated especially well online, where The Higdon Team has already built a sizable audience across YouTube, along with 20,000 Instagram subscribers, and more than 50,000 Facebook fans.



Clients also consistently mention how personal and attentive the experience feels from start to finish, something Jess believes matters far more than flashy marketing or ego-driven sales tactics.

“I have frequently heard from clients that it was the best real estate experience they’ve ever had,” she shares. “I don’t think that comes from negotiations but from our team making them feel they were the only client we were working with.”

Refined Through Faith

While Jess’s business continues growing rapidly, she openly acknowledges that some of the most important lessons came through one of the hardest seasons of her life. During the upheaval of 2020, the marketing and consulting business she and Ray built together suddenly became unstable almost overnight as event-based revenue disappeared and several major investments unraveled at the same time.





“
WE ARE
TRULY A
LUXURY
EXPERIENCE.”



“This was all happening while I had just had a baby and we had a 4-year-old daughter,” Jess recalls. “The stress was unbearable at the time.”

Looking back now, Jess believes those setbacks ultimately redirected her toward the career she was truly meant to pursue. What initially felt like failure slowly became the catalyst that pushed her fully into real estate, strengthened her marriage, deepened her faith, and reshaped how she defines success.

Today, faith remains deeply woven into both Jess’s personal life and the way she approaches her business relationships. The Higdon’s are active members at First Naples Church and Grow Church, and with permission, Jess openly prays over properties and client meetings and believes the difficult years ultimately prepared her to better steward the opportunities she has now been given.

“My faith keeps me inspired to help the next couple or family,” Jess affirms. “When your eyes are on God and his will, not only for your life but for your clients as well, everything falls into place beautifully.”

Big Plans Ahead

At home, Jess and Ray are preparing to celebrate 15 years of marriage this November while raising daughter Sabrina (10) and son Graham (6). Jess is also stepmother to Brandon (27) and Ethan (26) and much of their family time revolves around the beach, paddleboarding, pickleball, and supporting Sabrina’s growing passion for figure skating at Hertz Arena.

Although she enjoys pickleball, Pilates, and tennis, Jess says horseback riding remains her lifelong passion.

“I absolutely love horses and have since I was a little girl,” Jess beams. “I ride Western pleasure but have also competed in English hunter jumper events when I was younger. Now I enjoy sharing that love of horses with Sabrina as she begins exploring the sport herself.”

Giving back remains a major priority for Jess as well. She currently serves on the board for Southwest Florida Children’s Charities and the Southwest Florida Wine & Food Fest, while also supporting Project Outreach in Naples. Together, those organizations help provide critical healthcare resources and support for children and families throughout the local community.

Looking ahead, as The Higdon Team continues expanding, Jess’s family is already laying the groundwork to branch into the Nashville market, a city they have grown deeply connected to through frequent time spent in Franklin, Tennessee.

Even with those ambitious goals, Jess says maintaining a boutique feel and building strong leaders remains far more important than simply increasing headcount or reach.

“The ultimate team goal is to create the best, most self sufficient, leadership ready, forward thinking and sales motivated real estate advisors in the area,” Jess concludes. 🏡



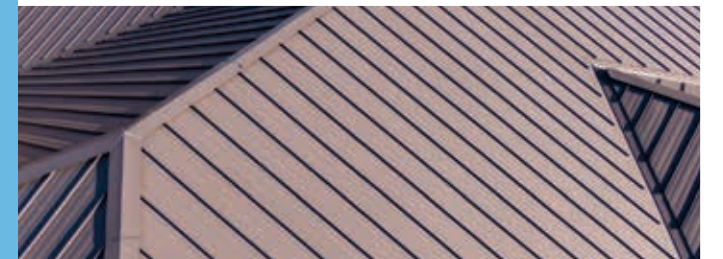
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BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY NEW
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LuAnn VIZZONE

COASTAL
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TITLE SERVICE THAT TRULY SHOWS UP

Although Coastal United Title officially opened its Southwest Florida locations just this February, the company enters the market with deep experience and established roots through its East Coast sister company, Hudson United Title. Now operating offices in Naples, Fort Myers, and Cape Coral, Coastal United is quickly gaining a reputation for responsive service, strong communication, and relationships that last beyond closing day.

“I have 17 years in the title field and my team understands Realtors need people they can truly rely on throughout the process,” LuAnn Vizzone explains. “Realtors know they can depend on us as the buffer in between; I tell my clients if I don’t get back to them in 15 minutes, something is wrong!”

Today, LuAnn serves as Sales Director while helping oversee a growing team of 10 employees focused on creating

smooth, seamless transactions for agents, buyers, and sellers throughout Southwest Florida.

Unexpected Career Shift

Originally from New Jersey, LuAnn’s career path looked very different before she ever stepped into the title world. After briefly attending design school, she followed her entrepreneurial instincts into the health club industry, opening her first gym at just 27 years old before eventually building and selling multiple locations over the next two decades.

After transitioning into real estate investing herself, she earned her real estate license and naturally became curious about the financing side of the business as well. That curiosity eventually led her into the mortgage industry during one of the most difficult periods in modern housing history.

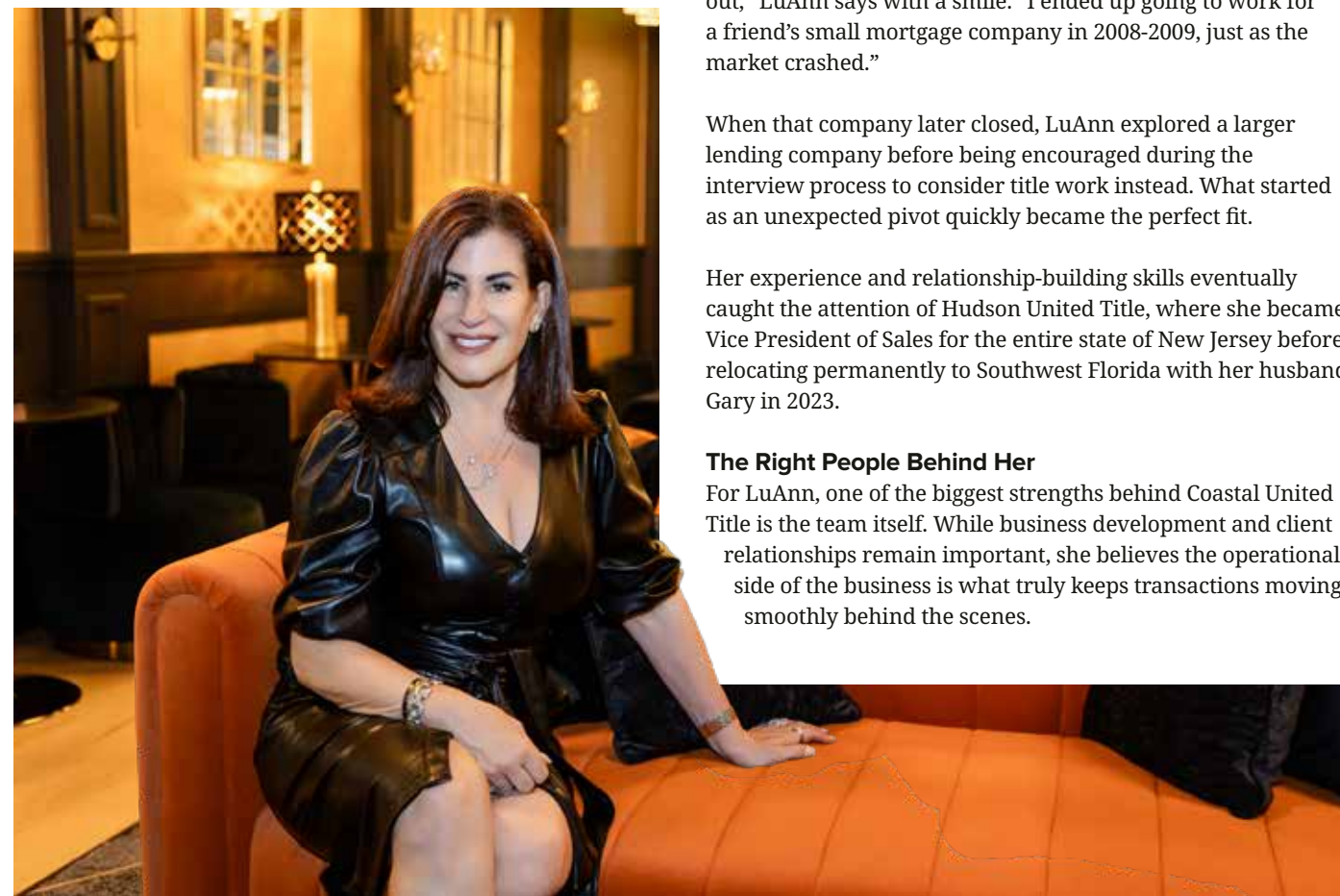
“I am the type of person who, if I don’t know something, I find out,” LuAnn says with a smile. “I ended up going to work for a friend’s small mortgage company in 2008-2009, just as the market crashed.”

When that company later closed, LuAnn explored a larger lending company before being encouraged during the interview process to consider title work instead. What started as an unexpected pivot quickly became the perfect fit.

Her experience and relationship-building skills eventually caught the attention of Hudson United Title, where she became Vice President of Sales for the entire state of New Jersey before relocating permanently to Southwest Florida with her husband Gary in 2023.

The Right People Behind Her

For LuAnn, one of the biggest strengths behind Coastal United Title is the team itself. While business development and client relationships remain important, she believes the operational side of the business is what truly keeps transactions moving smoothly behind the scenes.





“All of my employees are phenomenal, but if it wasn’t for our back office being stellar, we could be out selling all day long but it wouldn’t work,” LuAnn says with a touch of pride. “It took us a little time to find the best people, but we are very lucky to have them.”

That culture of teamwork and accessibility has become a defining part of the company’s strength. Coastal United intentionally operates with a hands-on mentality, recognizing that Realtors rarely work traditional office hours and issues do not conveniently appear during those times either.

“My business developers are available 24/7 because we know agents don’t just work 9-5,” LuAnn points out. “We’re even available nights and weekends to help solve problems.”

Mutual Partnership

Beyond smooth transactions, the company also prioritizes education and long-term relationships with the agents they serve. Coastal United regularly offers CE classes and lunch-and-learn events designed to help Realtors continue growing their businesses while staying informed on industry changes.

“Our goal is to add value and be true partners; we don’t want to take, we want to give,” LuAnn emphasizes.



That helpful perspective has helped the company establish early momentum in Southwest Florida while continuing to benefit from the larger East Coast infrastructure and support already built through its sister company.

LuAnn also understands the importance of consistency and responsiveness. Coastal United approaches every transaction with the realization that Realtors are trusting them not only with a file, but with their reputation and client relationships as well.

“Our top priority is customer service, communication and smooth, seamless transactions,” LuAnn notes.

Coastal United’s attention to service has become especially valuable in today’s ever-changing real estate landscape, where shifting markets, evolving regulations, and technology continue reshaping the transaction process. Rather than resisting those changes, LuAnn believes adaptability is one of the keys to long-term success in the industry.

“The real estate business changes all the time and is very cyclical,” she says. “As it changes we adapt to make sure we are on the cutting edge.”

Family Fun And Future Plans

Outside of title work, LuAnn enjoys spending time with Gary, her husband of 14 years, along with their grown children: Alexa, Alexandra, and Nicholas. Whether they are traveling together, hosting dinner parties, biking, or exploring Southwest Florida’s restaurant scene, family time and enjoying good food are a passion. The couple is currently considering a Mediterranean cruise to Greece later this year as their next adventure together.

LuAnn also remains heavily involved in the local real estate community. She currently serves as Event Director for the Women’s Council of Realtors, helping support Feeding Dreams, a charity that provides meals, backpacks, and school supplies to children throughout Collier County. She also previously held a leadership role with NABOR last year.

Looking ahead, LuAnn sees tremendous opportunity for continued growth throughout the Sunshine State as Coastal United expands its footprint while maintaining the service standards that are quickly helping to build its reputation.

“Our sister company has their eyes set on Southwest Florida and the rest of Florida,” LuAnn concludes with a grin. “But we don’t have to be the biggest, just the best!”

To learn more about Coastal United Title or schedule an appointment, visit www.coastalunitedtitle.com or call 239-518-6370.





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Sean and Taylor

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For Sean and Taylor Smuk, building a successful real estate business together wasn't part of the original plan. In fact, they spent the early days prospecting side by side while pursuing separate careers before one pivotal decision changed everything.

Today, the husband-and-wife duo run a thriving business at Coldwell Banker Realty, supported by two assistants and a showing agent, while consistently ranking among the top teams in their office. Their success certainly hasn't come from taking shortcuts, but rather, has been hard-earned with constant communication and a shared emphasis on prioritizing clients' best interests while keeping drama out of the deal.

Major Turning Point

Although Sean and Taylor ultimately paired up in real estate, they each arrived in the industry from very different directions.

Originally from Tampa, Taylor grew up in a real estate family where the business was woven into everyday life. Her father built an international reputation as one of the leading golf

BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY MICHELLE REED



course commercial brokers and business coaches, while her mother enjoyed a successful career in residential real estate. After leaving college, Taylor moved to Naples eager to begin a career of her own in late 2017.

Sean's path was a little more winding. Originally from upstate New York, he spent eight years in marketing and sales, helping local businesses develop their brands through social media, graphic design, and SEO.

"I didn't have any family in the business but I had several friends that were always encouraging me to go into real estate," Sean recalls. "I was working for a startup anti-aging and rejuvenation clinic when Taylor and I met. Hurricane Irma hit shortly thereafter and I knew our company was in trouble."

"I decided to sell my sweat equity in the business after seeing what Taylor was doing in real estate," he continues. "I was a single dad at the time, so the fire was lit when I got licensed at the beginning of 2018; and I had six listings within the first few months."

While Sean settled comfortably into the business almost immediately, Taylor's experience was anything but. Working open houses five days a week for a top-producing agent left her questioning whether she had made the right career choice. Ready to move back to Tampa, she called her mother looking for reassurance.

"Luckily, my mom encouraged me to go to this Mike Ferry conference in Fort Myers," Taylor acknowledges. "I drank the Koolaid and signed up for coaching with no money to my name."

"Then I got on the phone the day after that conference and learned the scripts — and my career took off from there," she reflects.

That single decision proved to be the catalyst neither spouse expected. Sean attended the next Mike Ferry conference alongside Taylor, and the coaching fundamentally changed how they approached the business. What started with prospecting separately from Sean's apartment gradually evolved into a true partnership with the right coaching,

with each agent recognizing they were stronger together than apart.

"Now we treat it like a family business while living and working together!" Taylor grins.

Sean nods in agreement. "It's actually really nice to have each other as a sounding board when there's a tough deal," he adds. "And it's fun to have someone to bounce ideas off of."

Strictly Business

Today, the Smuks approach real estate with the mindset of business owners rather than independent contractors. Every morning begins in the office. Systems are documented, communication is intentional, and every client benefits from clearly defined processes designed to create consistency from the first conversation through closing day.

That disciplined approach has produced impressive results. The duo has consistently earned recognition in the Top 100 for Coldwell Banker Florida, the Top 50 in Southwest Florida, and the Top

1% of Coldwell Banker Global Luxury International. More importantly, nearly half of their business now comes from repeat clients and referrals, something they view as the truest measure of trust.

As their business has grown, one of the greatest advantages they believe they offer clients is perspective. Because they consistently have multiple transactions moving at any given time, they never feel pressured to force a deal across the finish line. Instead, they can remove emotion from negotiations, navigate difficult conversations with professionalism, and recommend the ideal course of action for a client.

"Relationships always come before transactions," Sean emphasizes. "We genuinely care about our clients and believe trust is earned through honesty, communication, and consistently doing what's in their best interest. We want every client to feel like they have advisors for life, not just agents for one transaction."

Taylor agrees, adding that their unflappable demeanors have become one of the team's greatest assets.

"Clients really appreciate our mastering of those hard conversations while staying detached to calmly navigate the process," she affirms. "They will often say thank you and tell us, 'You dealt with me while I was being a jerk and didn't let it affect the deal.'"

A Shared Vision

Married since 2021 and together for a decade, the Smuks are raising three children — Evelyn, 15, Hudson, 2, and three-month-old baby Bryson — while intentionally creating a life centered around time together.

Whether it's Sean training for the New York City Marathon, running alongside Evelyn during a recent father-daughter trip to San Francisco for her to complete her first half-marathon, Taylor spending time horseback riding, or the couple

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prioritizing health, fitness, and wellness through strength training, running, saunas, and cold plunges, they share a belief that achievements means little without balance.

“Success is finding fulfillment in what you do while continually striving to become a better version of yourself every day,” Taylor shares.

Sean sees it much the same way, adding that his perspective on the matter centers on the example they are setting for their children.

Looking ahead, the pair remain focused on serving clients exceptionally well while continuing to grow their business toward 100 transactions annually.

They’re equally excited about the recent launch of Reavuu, an innovative platform they’ve designed to bring greater transparency to the real estate industry by helping consumers make more informed decisions when selecting an agent, by considering agent profiles much like they would when browsing properties on Airbnb.

“Our vision is to create meaningful change in an industry we’re incredibly passionate about,” Taylor says. “This has been a project in the works for over two and a half years and we’re excited to release this platform in Florida first and then continue to roll it out from there.”

As Sean often reminds himself with a favorite quote, this business readily rewards those that don’t grow complacent.

“Success isn’t owned — it’s rented, and the rent is due every day,” he recites. “And while I’m thankful that things fell into place quickly, I have learned much more from my failures than my successes and then adapted.”





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