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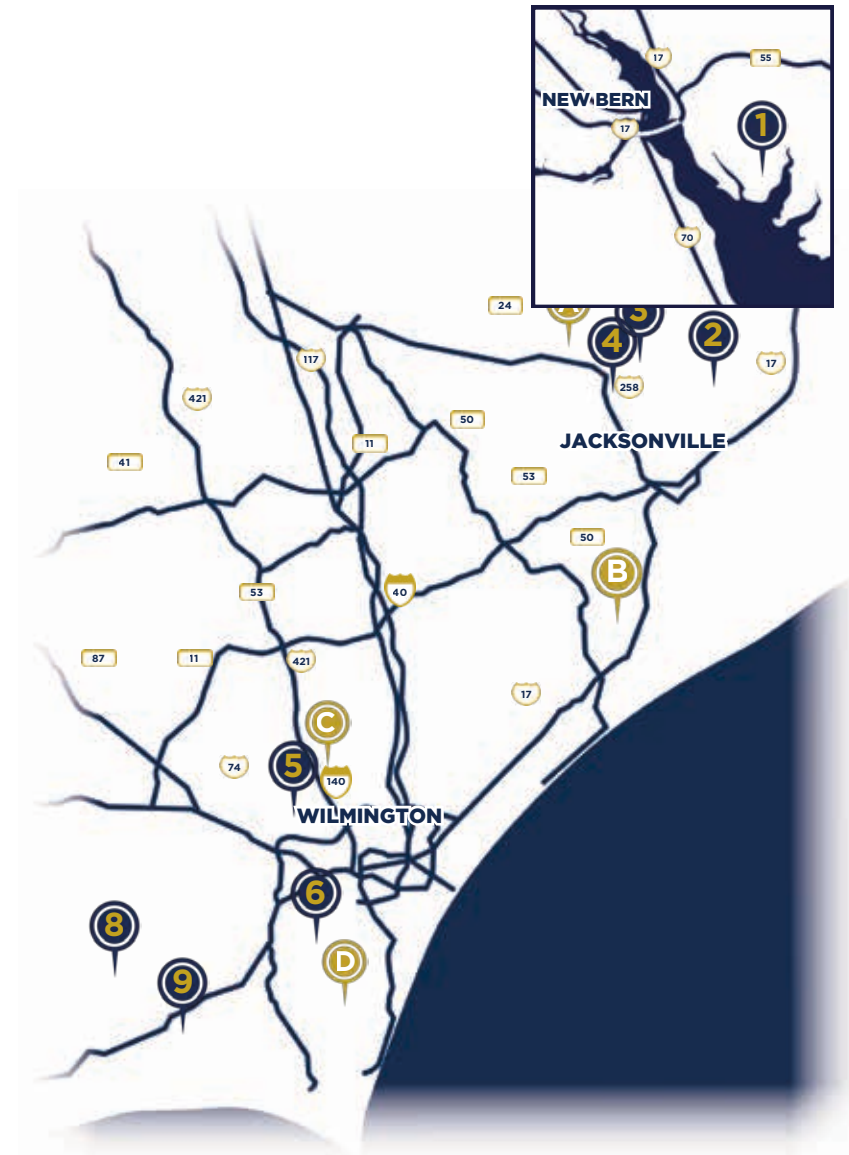
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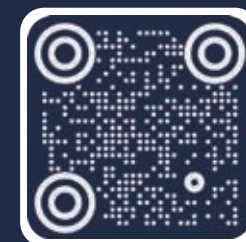
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THE YEAR OF RELENTLESS GROWTH



BY GABE CHANDLER

Welcome to 2026. A new year, a fresh start, and another opportunity to push the limits of what's possible in your business and your life.

But before we rush forward, let's get one thing straight—**success doesn't happen by accident.** It's the result of **intention, discipline, and the relationships you cultivate along the way.**

What Real Producers Is All About

If you're holding this magazine, you're not just any agent. **You're one of the best.**

Real Producers isn't about mediocrity. It's about the agents who **set the pace, raise the standard, and drive the market forward.** It's about those who **show up, build relationships, and play the long game.**

That's why this platform exists—not just to **recognize top Realtors, but to connect them.**

- To **introduce** you to the industry's top professionals.
- To **strengthen** your network with partnerships that elevate your business.
- To **inspire** you with the stories of those who have built something extraordinary.

Because in this business, **who you know is just as important as what you know.**

2026: The Year to Expand, Evolve, and Execute

If last year was about grinding, this year is about **growth.**

Ask yourself:

- **What's your next level?**
- **Where are you playing small?**
- **Who do you need in your corner to reach your biggest goals?**

The agents who will dominate in 2026 are the ones who **put themselves in the right rooms, around the right people, and take relentless action.**

This year, let's commit to something bigger than transactions. **Let's commit to legacy, impact, and mastery.**

This is the year you separate yourself. This is the year you sharpen your axe.



Welcome to 2026—let's make it your best year yet.

Gabriel Chandler

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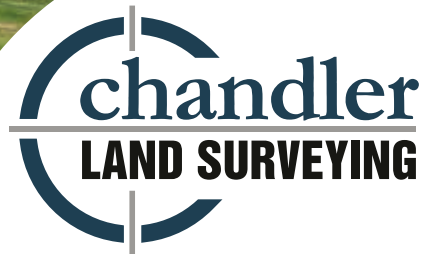
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TOP AI TOOLS RESIDENTIAL AGENTS WILL USE IN 2026

Artificial Intelligence is still finding its way into our day-to-day lives and making work more productive. Here are some examples of what we expect to help agents in the future.

AI CRMs (Your Digital Assistant)

Automatically score leads, follow up by text/email, and tell you who to call next. Less admin, more closings.

Predictive Seller Tools

AI identifies homeowners likely to sell before they list—based on equity, life events, and behavior. A major listing advantage.

AI Listing & Marketing Creation

Instantly generate listing descriptions, social posts, ads, and email campaigns optimized for SEO and conversions.

Virtual Staging & AI Tours

Digitally stage empty homes, enhance photos, and create 3D/AI walkthroughs faster and cheaper than traditional methods.

Smart Pricing & Market Insights

AI analyzes hyperlocal data to support pricing, timing, and negotiation with visuals sellers understand.

24/7 AI Chatbots

Answer buyer and seller questions, schedule showings, and capture leads around the clock.

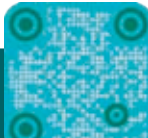
Overall, these AI tools are expected to become everyday infrastructure for residential real estate agents in 2026, handling much of the repetitive, time-consuming work that traditionally limits productivity. Used effectively, they help agents respond faster, target the right buyers and sellers, market listings more professionally, and price homes with greater confidence. The biggest impact isn't replacing the agent, but amplifying the agent's time, consistency, and decision-making, allowing professionals to focus on relationships, negotiation, and guidance—where human expertise still matters most.



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JILL WALSH

*From the
Classroom
to the Coast*



WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON
PHOTOS BY BRADLEY STICKLAND



For Realtor Jill Walsh, relationships have always been at the heart of everything she does. Before joining Keller Williams Innovate in Wilmington, North Carolina, Jill spent three decades shaping lives in education—first as a high school counselor, then as a principal for 15 years at Summerfield Elementary. “Building relationships is at the core of everything I do,” she says. “My staff, parents, and students knew me, trusted me, and knew that every decision I made was for the good of the children and the community.”

When Jill retired from education in 2020, she wasn’t ready to slow down. She was ready to begin a new

chapter—one that combined her lifelong love of people with her growing fascination for real estate.

From Education to Real Estate

Jill’s first spark of interest in real estate came years earlier, when she purchased a beach home in Ocean Isle in 2013. “I had such a great experience with my agent that it made me think, ‘Maybe one day this is something I’d love to do,’” she recalls. When the Covid pandemic slowed the pace of her day-to-day life, she finally had time to act on that idea. “I decided to work on my real estate license while the world was a little quieter.”

By December 2020, Jill had relocated permanently to

the coast and joined the Cheek Team in Ocean Isle Beach. Later, she expanded her expertise by earning her South Carolina license and working with the Angie Wilkie Team, learning from two mentors she describes as “exceptional leaders.” Today, she represents clients from the greater Wilmington area to Myrtle Beach, helping them buy and sell coastal homes with confidence.

Starting Over—And Thriving

Transitioning from an established role as a respected school principal to a brand-new career in real estate was both exciting and humbling. “It wasn’t easy,” Jill admits. “In education, I was a seasoned leader. In real estate, I was starting

from the ground up.” She had to push herself out of her comfort zone, meet new people, and establish herself in a community where she knew very few.

But just as she did in her school leadership roles, Jill leaned on what she knew best—relationships, empathy, and integrity. “I wanted to be more than a Realtor. I wanted to be a friend and neighbor,” she says. That mindset paid off. By the end of 2024, she had achieved the Silver Award with Keller Williams for her sales volume, closing more than \$16 million in transactions that year.

A Passion for People and Place

For Jill, real estate is deeply personal. She loves helping



“Their dreams become my dreams. I always do what’s in their best interest, even if that means advising them to wait or walk away.”

people reach their goals, whether it’s finding their first home, their dream beach property, or selling a place that holds years of memories. “Watching people make their dreams come true never gets old,” she says. “We’re in a position to guide families through some of the biggest decisions of their lives, and that’s a responsibility I take seriously.”

She describes herself as an “advisor, mentor, advocate, and champion” for her clients. “Their dreams become my dreams,” she

explains. “I always do what’s in their best interest, even if that means advising them to wait or walk away.”

Embracing Coastal Life

After a lifetime in central North Carolina, Jill’s move to the coast has been transformational. She has fully embraced the relaxed rhythm and natural beauty of the coastal lifestyle. “From boating the Intracoastal Waterway to relaxing on the beach or enjoying evenings with friends and family, I try to make every day count,” she says.



“Know your clients, listen to their needs, and partner with great marketing professionals who can help you communicate your message effectively.”

Her sons, Nick and Zack, both live nearby in the Wilmington area, and Jill treasures their time together. “We enjoy being on the water, spending time outdoors, and just being together,” she says. “Having them close is a blessing, and they’ve always supported me and encouraged me to chase my goals.”

Staying Grounded in Service

Even with her busy schedule, Jill remains deeply connected to causes that matter to her. She volunteers in local schools and occasionally serves as a substitute principal when needed—returning to her educational roots in meaningful ways. She also supports Hospice, an organization she holds close to her heart after witnessing firsthand the comfort and compassion they provide to families during difficult times.

Keys to Success

For Jill, success isn’t defined by numbers—it’s defined by impact. “When a family sends me a thank-you card after closing or tells me how happy they are in their new home, that’s what success looks like,” she says.

She credits the leadership and support at Keller Williams Innovate for helping her thrive. “Our leadership team is phenomenal,” she says.

“They offer daily check-ins and foster a culture of collaboration that truly makes a difference.”

Jill also emphasizes the importance of building a personal brand. “You need a clear identity in this business,” she explains. “Know your clients, listen to their needs, and partner with great marketing professionals who can help you communicate your message effectively.”

Advice for Aspiring Realtors

To those entering the field, Jill offers timeless advice: “Be patient, work hard, and stay focused on relationships. This business is not easy—it takes perseverance, integrity, and heart.”

She reminds new agents that success in real estate isn’t just about transactions. “It’s about people. When you make helping others your priority, everything else falls into place.”

All About the Relationships

After five years in real estate, Jill continues to grow, learn, and serve her clients with passion and authenticity. “I’ve worked hard to learn this business and this market,” she says. “But above all, I want people to know I’m here for them. Being a good Realtor is about more than numbers—it’s about people. That’s what drives me every day.”



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From the shores of Wrightsville Beach to the broader Wilmington market, Michelle Clark has built a real estate career defined by relationships, resilience, and results. As the founder of The Michelle Clark Team at Intracoastal Realty, Clark is known not only for her impressive production numbers but also for the heart-centered approach that has shaped her business over the past two decades.

Midwestern Roots, Strategic Foundations

Born and raised in the Cleveland, Ohio area in Solon, Michelle Clark carries with her a Midwestern work ethic that continues to influence her professional life. She earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from Ohio University, concentrating in General Business, Business Pre-Law, and Human Resource Management, with a minor in Political Science. That academic foundation, paired with her early

career in telecommunications, laid the groundwork for what would become a highly strategic real estate practice.

Before entering residential real estate, Clark spent 10 years in the telecommunications industry, working primarily in the real estate division of a cell tower company. Her most recent role involved renegotiating ground and tenant leases across a large cell tower inventory—experience that sharpened her negotiation skills and gave her a deep understanding of complex real estate agreements.

A Timely Leap Into Real Estate

Although real estate wasn't originally her primary career plan, Clark had long been intrigued by the industry. She obtained her real estate license while still working in telecommunications, initially envisioning house flipping as a side venture. When the residential market began to surge in 2004 and



Michelle Clark Team

ACTIVE ADVOCACY FOR THE COMMUNITY

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON
PHOTOS BY T.J. DRECHSEL

2005—and her department relocated following a corporate merger—it became clear that the timing was right for a change.

Licensed in 2005, Clark transitioned fully into real estate, bringing with her a rare combination of negotiation expertise, business acumen, and a genuine desire to help people. Twenty years later, she remains as passionate about the work as ever.

Building a Career—and a Team—With Purpose

Clark is proud to have spent her entire real estate career with Intracoastal Realty, where she now serves as a Broker in the Wrightsville Beach office. Over the years, she has earned numerous professional designations, including Certified Negotiation Expert (CNE), Accredited Luxury Home Specialist (ALHS), Seniors Real Estate Specialist (SRES), and Short Sales and Foreclosure Resource (SFR). Each

designation reflects her commitment to delivering informed, specialized service to clients at every stage of life and across all price points.

Her dedication has not gone unnoticed. Clark has been recognized as a Top Producer with Intracoastal Realty, a Real Producers Top 500 honoree, and a consistent multi-million-dollar producer. Among her most meaningful accolades are the Cape Fear Realtor Association's Paul Sullins Community Service Award in 2022 and Salesperson of the Year in 2010.

Results Backed by Relationships

With more than half a billion dollars in closed sales over her career and \$52.7 million in closed volume in 2024 alone, Clark's results speak for themselves. Still, she is quick to emphasize that success did not come overnight. Building a brand and a team from the ground up required consistency, adaptability, and a steadfast focus on

clients—especially as markets shifted and expectations evolved.

For Clark, the biggest game changers have been assembling a strong, values-aligned team and investing heavily in marketing. From professional photography to social media presence and community involvement, visibility and consistency have elevated both her reach and her client experience.

A Day Defined by Connection

No two days look the same in Clark's world, but every day begins with communication—checking in with clients and her team. From there, her schedule may include listing appointments, showings, negotiations, and team strategy sessions. What she values most is the human side of the work.

“The relationships are my favorite part,” she says. “Helping someone find a home or move into their next chapter is an incredible honor.”



Community at the Core

Outside of real estate, Clark is deeply committed to giving back. She has served as a board member and committee member for the Landfall Foundation, sits on the board of Beacon Education / GLOW (Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington), and has been an American Heart Association Heart Walk Team Captain for 12 years. She is also highly active at Wrightsville United Methodist Church, where she has held the Lay Leader position since 2020.

At home, Clark enjoys traveling—especially to Europe—practicing Pilates, attending concerts, and spending time with her husband, Kevin Bradley, whom she married in December 2020. They share their home with three cats—Phoenix, Sedona, and Cali—and make regular trips back to Ohio to visit family.

Defining Success and Looking Ahead

To Clark, success means building lasting relationships, fostering a strong team culture, giving back to the community, and maintaining a fulfilling life outside of work. Her goals for the future include expanding her team, increasing market share in the greater Wilmington region, growing community impact initiatives, and continuing to raise the standard for luxury and residential marketing.

For new agents, her advice is simple but powerful: be consistent, stay authentic, invest in relationships, and communicate constantly.

If one thing defines Michelle Clark, it's this: she leads with heart. And in a business built on trust, that may be her greatest strength of all.

“The relationships are my favorite part. Helping someone find a home or move into their next chapter is an incredible honor.”

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PuroClean

Serving as Paramedics of Property Damage

WRITTEN BY DAVE DANIELSON
PHOTOS BY BRADLEY STICKLAND

When disaster strikes a home or business, quick, skilled, and compassionate help can make all the difference. That's exactly what PuroClean of Wilmington delivers under the leadership of Owner/Operator Gerard Wynne. Specializing in water, fire, mold, biohazard remediation, and odor elimination, the company provides vital services to clients in some of their most stressful moments.

"We're the Paramedics of Property Damages," Gerard says. "Our mission is to step in, stabilize the situation, and help people recover as quickly as possible."

A Family Connection Leads to Ownership

The PuroClean franchise has been serving Wilmington since 2005, and Gerard has been at the helm since July 2020. His introduction to the business came years earlier through a family connection—his uncle originally owned the franchise, and Gerard often stepped in to help during busy times. When the opportunity came to purchase the company, it felt like the natural next step.

"I've always valued service and being there for others in need," Gerard explains. "This business allowed me to carry that forward in a very tangible way."

A Veteran's Approach to Service

Gerard's military background plays a significant role in how he operates the company. Originally from East Islip, Long Island, Gerard served most of his adult life in the military before being medically retired. In that role, he supervised a team of 15, learning leadership, accountability, and the importance of precision under pressure.

"I bring the same approach that was drilled into my head in the military," Gerard says. "We're always ready to help wherever we can. That mindset translates directly into what we do at PuroClean."

That readiness, combined with a strong emphasis on communication, sets the company apart. Clients can count on



prompt service, honest pricing, and a team that does exactly what they say they'll do.

The Team Behind the Mission

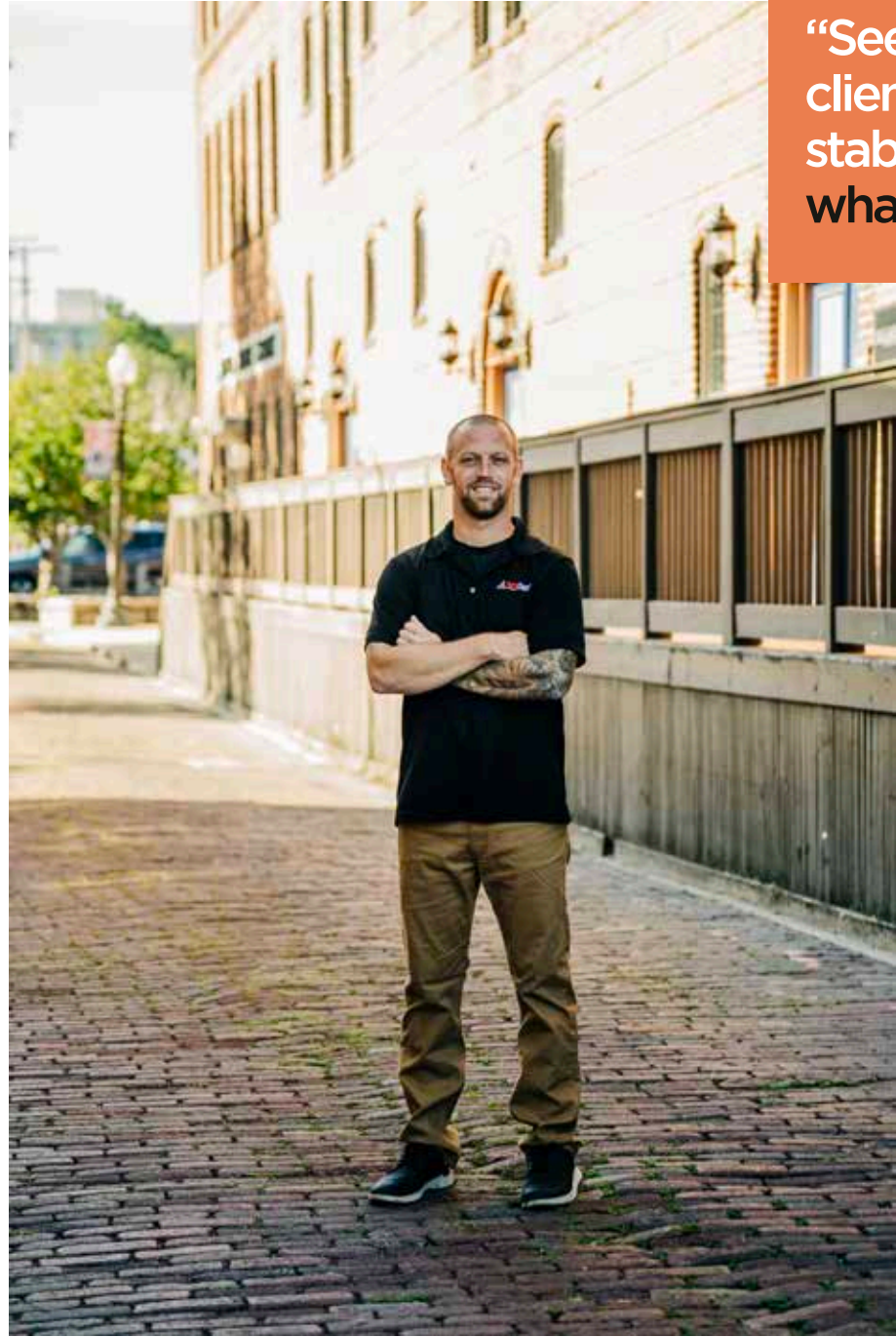
While Gerard's leadership sets the tone, he is quick to point out that PuroClean of Wilmington is a team effort. The dedicated staff includes Angela, Project Manager/Estimator; Don and Jon, Lead Technicians; Courtney, Technician; and Jacque, Office Administrator.

Each brings unique expertise and commitment to serving clients well.

"Our team is truly the backbone of what we do," Gerard notes. "Every member plays a critical role in helping families and businesses through difficult situations."

A Trusted Partner for Realtors

For top-producing Realtors in the region, PuroClean of Wilmington



“Seeing the relief on a client’s face when we’ve stabilized a situation is what drives me forward.”

provides an essential partnership. Real estate transactions can stall—or even collapse—when unexpected property damage is discovered. Having a reliable remediation partner ensures clients’ needs are addressed quickly and thoroughly.

“There’s a lot of competition in this area,” Gerard says. “But what makes us different is that we’re locally owned, veteran owned, and I’m a visible, present owner. Realtors can trust that

when they call me, I’ll communicate clearly and follow through. That’s something clients remember—and it reflects positively on their agents, too.”

Passion Rooted in Family and Community

While Gerard is deeply committed to his business, his passion is equally centered on family. He and his wife are raising their children in Wilmington, where they enjoy the coastal lifestyle that reminds him of Long Island’s mix

of big-city energy and small-town community.

Maintaining balance is important to Gerard. He makes it a priority to attend his children’s school events and soccer games, and the family enjoys seasonal vacations together—often heading to the mountains to relax and recharge.

“My family is my biggest inspiration,” Gerard says. “They’ve supported me every step of the way.”

Looking Ahead

As Gerard looks to the future, his goals are focused on growth—both for the company and the community. Expanding services to meet evolving needs, continuing to hire and train skilled professionals, and deepening partnerships with Realtors are all on the horizon.

“The most rewarding part of what we do is helping people through some of their hardest days,” Gerard says. “Seeing the relief on a client’s face when we’ve stabilized a situation is what drives me forward.”

A Steadfast Resource in Times of Need

From water damage after a storm to unexpected fire or mold issues, PuroClean of Wilmington stands ready as a trusted resource for homeowners, businesses, and Realtors alike. With a veteran’s discipline, a family man’s heart, and a dedicated team, Gerard Wynne leads the company with integrity and purpose.

His message to Realtors is simple: “We are always ready. Give us a chance for your clients’ needs, and we will do whatever it takes.”





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