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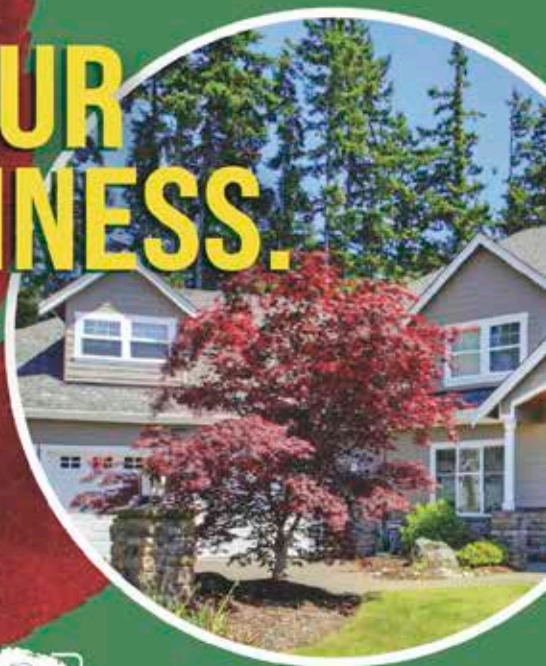
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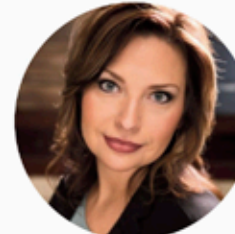
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4 REASONS MOST SALESPEOPLE FAIL

Success in sales isn't random—and failure usually isn't either. Most struggling salespeople don't fail because of the market, competition, or lack of opportunity. They fail because of four common breakdowns that quietly limit growth and consistency.

- 1. Lack of Strategy.** Top producers don't "wing it." They operate with a plan, clear goals, and intentional systems that guide daily decisions and long-term growth.
- 2. Lack of Consistent Activity.** Success in sales comes from disciplined action. Prospecting, follow-up, and relationship-building must happen consistently, not just when business slows down.
- 3. Lack of Skill Development.** Communication, negotiation, marketing, and objection-handling are skills that must be sharpened continually. The best salespeople never stop learning.
- 4. Too Many Distractions.** Busy doesn't always mean productive. Top performers protect their focus, eliminate low-value tasks, and stay committed to income-producing activities.

The good news? Every one of these areas can be improved with intentional habits, accountability, and the right environment.

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COVER STORY

If you are interested in contributing or nominating agents for a story in future issues, please email us at betty.lee@realproducersmag.com.

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In honor of America 250, The N2 Company and Blue Ridge Real Producers proudly celebrate the leaders, businesses, and community builders whose service and entrepreneurial spirit continue to shape our nation.

Hello, Real Producers!

As America approaches its 250th anniversary, we reflect on the strength of this nation that has come from people willing to lead, serve, build, and invest in their communities. This milestone allows us to honor the generations of Americans who came before us, especially the brave men and women who served to protect the freedoms and opportunities we often take for granted. Their courage and sacrifice continue to shape the foundation of our nation and inspire the values we carry forward today.

Locally, we see the American spirit every day through the entrepreneurial drive of real estate professionals, business owners, and industry partners who serve our community with integrity and heart. From helping families find homes to supporting local businesses and strengthening neighborhoods, your work leaves a lasting impact on the communities you serve.

On a personal note, my father, Bill Pappas, enlisted in the U.S. Navy at just 17 years old to serve our country during World War II. My grandfather had to sign the enlistment papers because he was still underage. In fact, he had tried to enlist the year before but was sent home by a Navy recruiter who knew my grandfather personally. Like so many of the Greatest Generation, my father served at great personal sacrifice. Many of his friends never came home from the war. I'm here today because he did.

When you're done reading this issue, visit n2co.com/america250 for a special collection of stories sourced from more than 800 hyperlocal magazines like this one.

At *Blue Ridge Real Producers*, we are honored to celebrate the top-performing real estate professionals and trusted partners who continue to lead with service, professionalism, generosity, and community spirit.

As we reflect on our nation's history, may we never lose sight of the blessings of freedom, the importance of service, and the responsibility we share to lead the next generation with courage, gratitude, and grace.

Warmly,



Betty Lee, Owner

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September 24
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November 11
Blue Ridge Real Producers Holiday Celebration Smith Mountain Lake

Another signature gathering is in the works—details coming soon.

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MIKE WALKER

Walker's Plumbing

SERVICE YOU CAN SALUTE

STORY BY JACKI DONALDSON

“

WE DON'T JUST FIX PLUMBING PROBLEMS. WE'RE HELPING PEOPLE PROTECT ONE OF THEIR BIGGEST INVESTMENTS.”

In real estate, few things can derail a transaction faster than a plumbing issue. A failed water heater, a well pump on its last leg, an unexpected sewer line problem, or poor water quality can quickly turn excitement into uncertainty for buyers and sellers alike. That's why top-producing agents know the value of having trusted professionals in their corner—people who answer the phone, show up when they say they will, and solve problems the right way the first time.

For many agents throughout Central Virginia, that trusted professional is Mike Walker, owner of Walker's Plumbing.

Since founding the company in 2007, Mike has built a reputation for reliability, expertise, and honest service. Today, Walker's Plumbing serves homeowners, businesses, and real estate professionals throughout Bedford, Lynchburg, Roanoke, and surrounding communities, offering everything from emergency repairs and water heater replacements to well pump services, water treatment systems, sewer line repairs, and complete plumbing installations. “We don't just fix plumbing problems,” Mike says. “We're helping people protect one of their biggest investments.” That mindset has helped Walker's Plumbing become one of the area's most trusted plumbing companies.

A U.S. military veteran, Mike brings the same discipline, accountability, and attention to detail that defined his military service into every aspect of his business. He founded Walker's Plumbing with a

simple mission: treat customers honestly, do quality work, and stand behind every job.

Nearly two decades later, those principles remain at the heart of the company. “We want people to feel confident when they hire us,” Mike explains. “Whether they need a small repair or a major project, we're going to communicate clearly, do the work correctly, and make sure customers understand what's happening every step of the way.”

That commitment is particularly valuable in the real estate world, where timelines matter and unexpected plumbing issues can create stress for everyone involved.

Agents frequently call Walker's Plumbing when inspections reveal issues requiring immediate attention. Mike and his team understand the urgency and work diligently to deliver solutions that keep transactions moving.





“

RESPECT, RELIABILITY, AND RESULTS. THAT'S THE STANDARD WE BRING TO EVERY JOB.”

The company's expertise extends far beyond basic plumbing repairs. Walker's Plumbing specializes in water heater repair and replacement, drain cleaning, sewer and water line repairs, bathroom remodel plumbing, commercial plumbing services, well pump systems, and advanced water treatment solutions.

For many homeowners in Central Virginia, especially those on well water, water quality is a major concern. Walker's Plumbing installs and maintains water softeners, whole-home filtration systems, UV purification systems, and reverse osmosis systems designed to improve both water quality and overall peace of mind. "Every home is different," Mike says. "We take the time to understand what's going on and recommend solutions that truly fit the customer's needs."

The company's commitment to quality is reinforced by something Mike believes should be standard but often isn't: standing behind the work after the job is complete. Walker's Plumbing provides a two-year parts-and-labor warranty on its services, giving customers confidence that the company will be there long after the invoice is paid. "We want our customers to know we're invested in the outcome," Mike says. "If we're putting our name on a job, we're going to stand behind it."

That accountability has helped Walker's Plumbing earn an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau and the trust of hundreds of homeowners, business owners, and real estate professionals throughout the region.

The company also maintains a Virginia Class A Contractor's License, ensuring customers receive service from fully licensed and insured professionals who meet the highest industry standards.

Despite the company's growth, Mike remains committed to the community-focused approach that has defined Walker's Plumbing from the beginning. Based in Bedford County, the family-operated business continues to prioritize relationships over transactions and long-term trust over short-term gains.

Mike is all about building lasting relationships. Customers know they have a dependable plumbing partner they can count on, and agents can confidently make referrals knowing their clients are in good hands. "Respect, reliability, and results," Mike says. "That's the standard we bring to every job." For busy real estate agents, Mike is exactly the kind of partner worth having on speed dial. ❏



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BECKY *Brawley*

NEST NEW RIVER VALLEY

From Push to Purpose: What Started as a Challenge Became a Calling

BECKY BRAWLEY pursued real estate because she had something to prove. Her husband and a friend had been encouraging her to get her license, something she never thought she'd do. But she figured she'd give it a shot and put a stop to the nudging. Becky was pregnant with her youngest child and navigating the uncertainties of the pandemic when she took the real estate class and passed her test. "And here I am," she says.

Becky didn't ask many questions in the early days. "I figured things out as I went because I never expected real estate to become a long-term career," she explains. She relied heavily on Zillow leads, which were a valuable resource but a demanding business model. She was glued to her phone 24/7, answering calls and meeting people everywhere.

As she learned and grew in the industry and saw a future in the business, she realized she needed to find a brokerage that aligned with her core values. "I met with almost every broker in town," she notes. She landed at Nest Realty for its hometown culture, people-first approach, phenomenal agents, and

community outreach. "The brokerage has been an absolute game-changer for my business," shares Becky, who no longer utilizes paid leads. "I learned to lean into my network and community. I do less chasing and focus on intentional interactions."

Today, Becky's business runs on referrals, and she has found a healthy work-life balance that allows her to spend quality time with her family and participate in local and state committees, including the NRVAR Board of Directors, RPAC, the community service task force, state research advisory, and the DEI committees. She's particularly passionate about fair and accessible housing and is steadfast in educating people about the many resources they may not know about, such as grants, programs, and loans that help people get into housing.

What she's not steadfast about is sharing her volume and transaction stats. "I am grateful for every referral and client and like to focus on that," she states. "Numbers matter, but people are most important. As long as my clients are happy, I'm happy."

STORY BY JACKI DONALDSON
PHOTOS BY KRISTINA ROSE, KRISTINA ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY





Becky's honors and awards underscore the phenomenal work she's doing. She is especially proud to have received the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce 2026 Women's Leadership Award for Emerging Businesswoman of the Year. "As a mom who was home with kids for years trying to build a career, that one meant a lot," she says. She also earned the New River Valley Association of REALTORS® Community Builder Award in 2026, a fitting honor for someone whose marketing efforts always benefit the community. Becky advertises at sporting events that support youth athletics, Relay for Life® events benefiting the American Cancer Society, and food drives that give back to the community.

One of her favorite community events is Donuts with Santa at her office. "Clients, friends, family, neighbors, and first-time faces come together so their littles can hug the sweetest Santa, share a donut, color, laugh, and feel pure joy," Becky describes. "The love in the room is overwhelming in the very best way. Full hearts, happy kids, and all the Christmas magic."

Becky's love for meaningful moments extends to her closing gifts. "I learn a bit about each family and choose something personal for them," she shares. For one



I am forever grateful for it all and everyone who has nudged, supported, and encouraged me along the way."

family with three children who love movie nights, she made movie baskets and left them on the kitchen counter for move-in day. For another family with kids who love Minnie Mouse, she set up a princess tent and a dancing Minnie to welcome them to their new home.

Her commitment extends well beyond the transaction. "If someone needs staging or clean-out help, we have a pull-behind trailer we can use to help them," she shares. "My husband never hesitates to throw a mower in the truck and mow

a lawn or help with any project we need to tackle. I don't just write a contract or slap a sign in the yard."

At home, Becky and her husband, Stephen, keep busy with their four children, Kailyn, Aiden, Christian, and Colin, and their Goldendoodle, Finn. The family is often at the ball field, in their driveway playing ball, or riding bikes. They also love fire-pit nights and making the most of every moment to slow down and soak up family time. Becky, a lifelong athlete and former

personal trainer and coach with 15 years of experience, also tries to squeeze in exercise as much as she can.

Reflecting on her real estate career, Becky marvels at where she is today. "Going from being 'Mom' to becoming 'REALTOR® Mom,' I had no idea what would happen, and I never thought I'd be here, this year earning a new title of Associate Broker," she comments. "I am forever grateful for it all and everyone who has nudged, supported, and encouraged me along the way." ▀

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WHAT SEPARATES **TOP-PRODUCING REALTORS®** FROM EVERYONE ELSE?



BY JONATHAN SWEAT, BRANCH MANAGER/MORTGAGE LOAN ORIGINATOR, THE LEGACY TEAM

One of the biggest misconceptions in real estate is that top-producing agents work harder than everyone else. While work ethic matters, the agents consistently growing year after year usually have something else in common: they intentionally surround themselves with the right strategy, systems, and people. At The Legacy Team, we believe our role should go far beyond pre-approvals and interest rates. Any lender can quote rates. Our mission is to help REALTORS® grow their business, sharpen their skills,



and create more long-term opportunities. That's why we invest heavily into education and partnership opportunities for our referral partners through weekly Boot Camps, quarterly workshops, and business-growth training designed specifically for REALTORS®.

What makes your approach different from most mortgage companies?

Most mortgage companies focus almost exclusively on transactions. We focus on relationships and

growth. We want our agents to feel like they have a true business partner in their corner—someone helping them think strategically about lead generation, client conversion, systems, communication, and long-term scalability. Every Wednesday, we host a **live REALTOR® Boot Camp** where we share one actionable tactic agents can implement immediately to improve their business. Some weeks, we cover lead follow-up, open-house conversion strategies, database growth, time management, social media, scripting, or negotiation tactics. The goal is simple: help agents produce at a higher level. In addition to our weekly Boot Camps, we also host **quarterly workshops** that go deeper into business planning, marketing, and scaling strategies. We bring agents together to collaborate, learn, and grow in a constantly changing, competitive market.

Why do you think education matters so much in today's market?

Because the market is changing fast and agents who stop growing usually get left behind. The most successful REALTORS® I know are committed to learning. They understand that skill development is no longer optional. Consumers expect better communication, faster responses, stronger negotiation, and a higher level of professionalism than ever before. The agents winning right now are the ones improving their systems, refining their processes, and staying intentional with their business development activities. Our goal is to create an environment where agents feel challenged, encouraged, and equipped with practical tools they can actually use.

What do top-producing REALTORS® tend to do differently?

Top producers protect their time extremely well. They consistently focus on income-producing activities, even when they're busy. They also understand the value of leverage and relationships. They don't try to build their business alone. They intentionally align with strong partners who can help them deliver a better client experience and free them to focus on growth. The best agents also follow up relentlessly. Most real estate opportunities are lost simply because someone failed to stay consistent in their communication.

What is your ultimate goal with agents you partner with?

We want to help agents build businesses that create freedom, consistency, and long-term success. At the end of the day, we measure success by more than just closed loans. We want our partners to grow their referrals, strengthen client relationships, improve profitability, and build a business that lasts. That's why The Legacy Team is committed to delivering more than mortgages. We're committed to helping REALTORS® build a legacy.



CONTACT US!

To learn more about The Legacy Team, join our **REALTOR® Boot Camp** every Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. at ZoomLegacyTeam.com or contact Jonathan Sweat at 540-314-8843.

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Thomas & Ashley

FELLERS

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ALL ROADS LEAD HERE

Thomas and Ashley Fellers have never questioned any path they've taken that has led them to where they are today. From meeting at the school newspaper at Christopher Newport University (Ashley was the managing editor and Thomas her copy editor) and attending grad school together at Virginia Tech to selling their home and building their real estate business from a downtown Roanoke loft during the pandemic, they treasure every step.

STORY
BY JACKI
DONALDSON
PHOTOS
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They reflect fondly on their time in that downtown loft with a charming deck overlooking the COVID-empty streets below. "It was such a challenging time, but we really used that season to prepare for everything that came next," Ashley says. "We wrote a homebuyer handbook there and built our business model and

marketing plans. We were so focused on creating something that reflected our values and the service we wanted to give clients."

Thomas and Ashley approach their work from a goal-driven concept of what home means. "Our model is based on life goals," Thomas explains. "Many people

feel they spend their lives serving their home rather than letting their home serve them, and they can get hung up on bed and bath counts or status markers. But the opposite can also be true. They can leverage a home to reflect their life and values. We've had clients who sold homes to start nonprofits, for example." One of the Fellers' taglines is "Your home should work for you, not the other way around."

Before Thomas launched full-time into real estate in 2020 and Ashley subsequently became his official partner and Director of Marketing, they had a storied history of meaningful work.



“THE TRUTH IS THAT EVERYONE WHO DOES WELL IN THIS BUSINESS DOES SO BECAUSE THEY ARE **PART OF A TEAM.**”



Ashley, Beyond the Listing

- **Passion Project:** Supporting local artists and creating opportunities for them to connect and showcase their work.
- **Fun Fact:** She can ride a unicycle, a skill she learned thanks to her father's belief that it would improve her athletic endeavors.
- **What Drives Her:** Helping people and places tell their stories beautifully.
- **Higher Education:** Bachelor's degree in English with concentrations in journalism and literature; Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

After finishing graduate school, Thomas considered a career in academia but realized the path was not the best fit for his talents. In 2008, he joined R. Fralin Construction, beginning a career in homebuilding just as the recession was taking hold. Over the next 11½ years, Thomas built deep relationships with agents, brokers, contractors, engineers, and homebuyers while gaining extensive experience in negotiation, construction, and transaction management. Throughout that time, he had his real estate license, which laid the groundwork for the next chapter of his career.

Ashley followed amore eclectic path, embracing a variety of freelance opportunities after graduate school. She worked as a writer, served as a leasing assistant, and took on photography and marketing projects. Although she earned her real estate license, she quickly realized traditional sales was not for her. Instead, she gravitated toward creative and strategic work. (In grad school, she even spent time as a baker's assistant, selling breads and pastries at local farmers' markets.)

Toward the end of 2019, Thomas chose a new trajectory. “I decided I could mature as a person and professional,” he states. “I'd had my real estate license for more than a decade, and it made sense to deploy it to the open market by building a book of clients under the purview of MKB.” He laughs about his career milestones, noting, “I like to start new things at the most inopportune times, like the 2008 recession and the 2020 pandemic.”

Ashley would gradually shift her professional focus, with Thomas becoming an increasingly significant part of her freelance work through photography, marketing, and design projects. Today, she also writes listing descriptions, runs advertising, and styles and stages properties. She meets with sellers and consults on the front end, strategizing to get them ready for market. She recalls styling Thomas' first listing and cramming chairs into her car. Now, she has two large storage units and a sophisticated system. Clients call her the “Fairy Godmother of Listings.” She still writes a bit for *The Roanoker Magazine* to keep one foot in that world and stay involved locally.

Thomas credits Ashley for helping build their business momentum. “The truth is that everyone who does well in this business does so because they are part of a team,” he comments. “We also have a transaction coordinator and the best broker anyone could ask for. Everyone's contributions are invaluable, including the third parties we work with.”



Thomas, Off the Clock

- **The Ride:** A black Toyota Land Cruiser with T-FELL plates.
- **Signature Cocktail:** La Louisiane.
- **Unexpected Talent:** Spotting celebrity doppelgängers.
- **Higher Education:** Bachelor's degree in journalism and technical writing; master's degree in English literature.

Ashley praises Thomas for his unique gift as an exceptional quiet listener who thinks before he responds. "He also has a rare gift for negotiating and helping people find consensus," she adds.

Looking in the rearview mirror, Thomas and Ashley are proud to have closed \$21 million in residential sales in 2025. During the past two years, they have averaged more than 50 transactions annually, helping 103 sellers and 109 buyers achieve their real estate goals.

Yet for all they have accomplished professionally, some of their favorite

moments remain remarkably simple. On Saturday mornings, they are often on their back porch with coffee in hand, paging through the weekend edition of *The Wall Street Journal*, especially the Off Duty and Review sections. They also enjoy diving into profiles from *The New Yorker*, a habit that began early in their relationship.

After two decades of marriage, countless conversations, multiple careers, and a business they've built together, Thomas and Ashley wouldn't change a thing. "We approach each day with a genuine appreciation for what we have," they share. ▀

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2025

BY THE
NUMBERS

Here's what the Blue Ridge Real Producers
Top 300 REALTORS® sold in 2025

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FAQS

WELCOME TO REAL PRODUCERS!



Here, we answer the most frequently asked questions about our program, and we are always open to discussing anything regarding this community—this publication is 100% designed to be your voice.

Q: What Is The Cost To Feature A REALTOR®, Agent, Or Team?

A: Features are completely free—we are not a pay-to-play publication. We share real stories of top producers based on achievements and nominations.

Q: Who Are The Preferred Partners?

A: Preferred partners are the businesses on the index at the front of the magazine who actively support this community. They appear in every issue, attend our quarterly events, and participate in our online community. We do not randomly select these businesses or work with every company that approaches us. One or more agents in this community have recommended every preferred partner you see. In fact, we won't meet with a business that you or your peers have not vetted and approved. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network of REALTORS®, agents, and trusted affiliates so we can grow stronger together.

Q: How Can I Recommend A Preferred Partner?

A: If you'd like to recommend a local business that works with top real estate agents, please reach out at betty.lee@realproducersmag.com.

Q: Who Receives This Magazine?

A: The magazine goes to the Top 300 real estate agents in Central and Southwest Virginia, based on their sales volume from the previous year, and our preferred partners. With thousands of agents in the region, being part of this elite group is a testament to your hard work, dedication, and success.

Q: What Is The Process For Being Featured In This Magazine?

A: Anyone on the Top 300 list can nominate other real estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners, or themselves. Office leaders may also submit nominations. We consider everyone in the Top 300 who comes to our attention because we don't know everyone's story, and we rely on your help to learn about them. While we can't guarantee a feature, we encourage you to meet with a team member, support the publication, and attend our private events to increase your chances.



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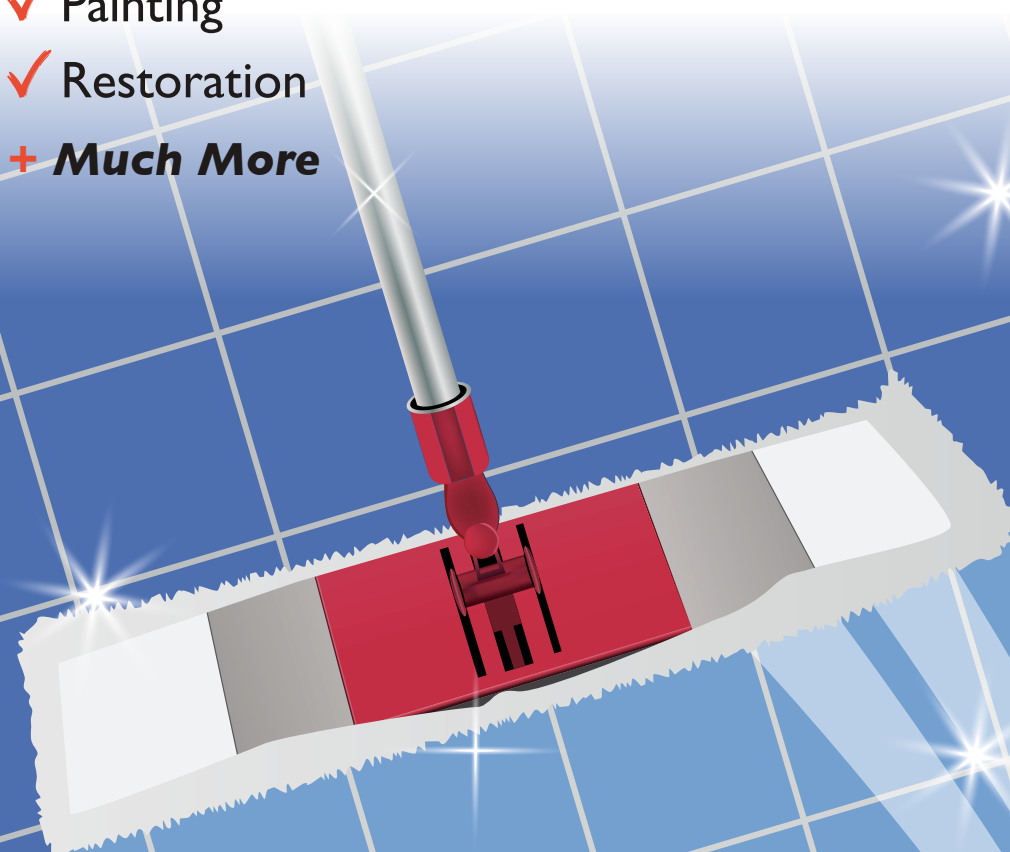
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