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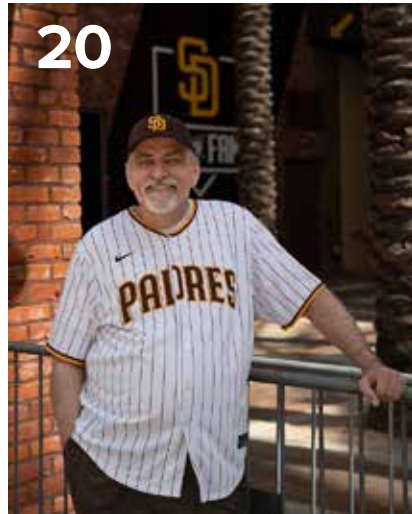


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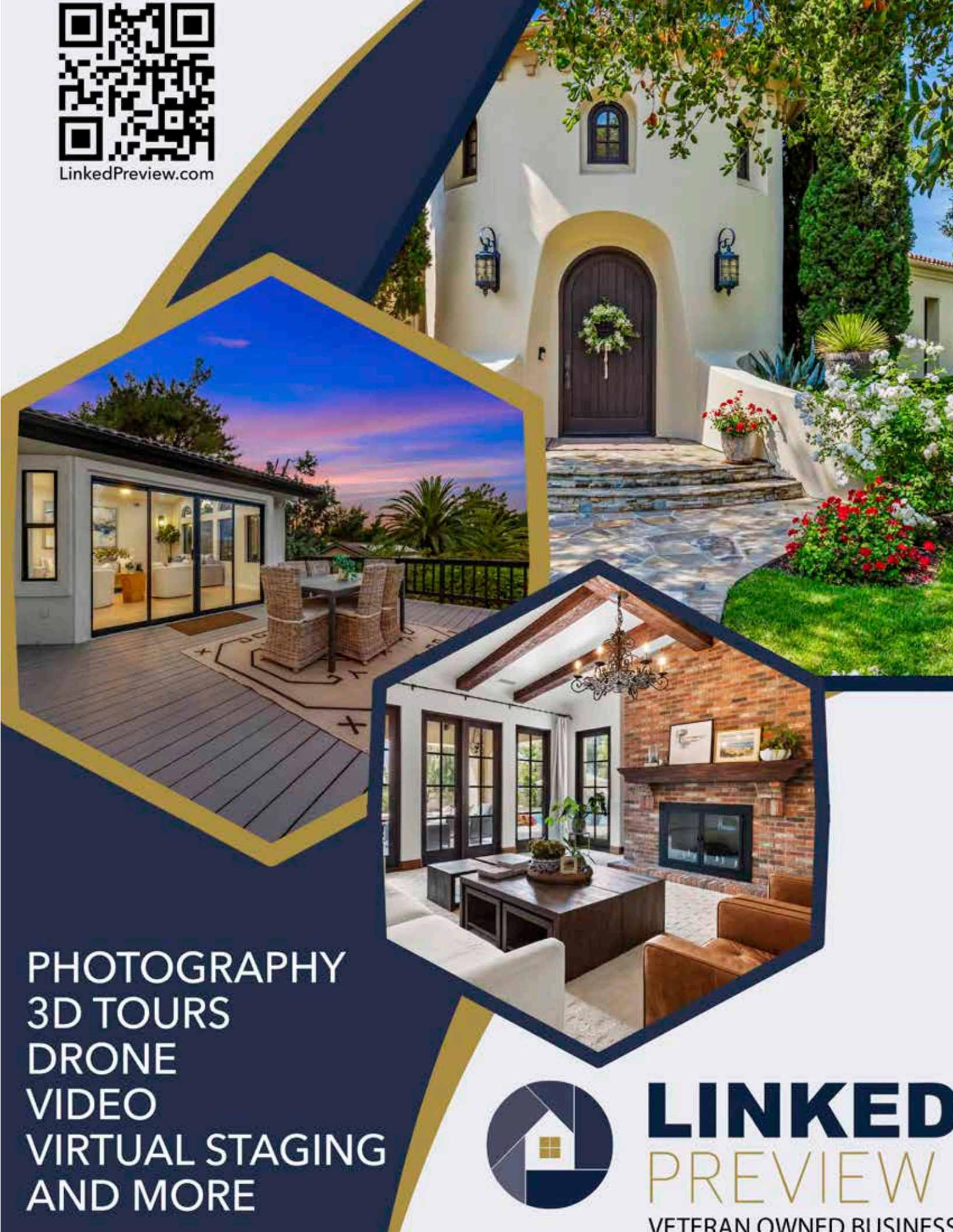
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# Cheers to 250 Years!

As we celebrate the Fourth of July, we are reminded of the enduring spirit of freedom, opportunity, and community that defines our nation. This year carries special significance as we commemorate America's 250th anniversary—a milestone that invites us to reflect on our history while looking ahead to an exciting future.

Homeownership has long been woven into the American Dream, providing generations of families with stability, security, and a place to build lasting memories. For 250 years, the ability to own property has represented not only personal achievement but also the strength and growth of our communities.

In this issue, we proudly feature outstanding real estate professionals who continue that tradition every day. Their dedication, expertise, and commitment to serving clients help turn dreams into addresses and houses into homes.

As we honor our nation's remarkable journey, we also celebrate the agents who play a vital role in helping families create their own piece of the American story.

Wishing you a safe, happy, and meaningful Independence Day.

Cheers!

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Maryam Habashi, M.Ed.  
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## The Hidden Cost of Operating Without Systems

BY MARYAM HABASHI- TRANSFORMATIONAL BUSINESS COACH

Why do some professionals work harder every year yet continue to experience unpredictable weeks, months, quarters, and years?

The answer is often simpler than they think: they don't have systems.

Many sales professionals and leaders rely on talent, experience, and hard work to drive results. While those qualities matter, they cannot create consistency on their own. Without systems, success becomes dependent on motivation, memory, and momentum.

The challenges are familiar: inconsistent prospecting, missed follow-up opportunities, unclear priorities, recruiting struggles, team dependency, and burnout.

The opportunity? Predictability.

In sales, systems create consistency around prospecting, appointments, presentations, closing, and follow-up.

They rely on repeatable processes that produce measurable outcomes.

For nearly three decades, I've worked with thousands of producers, leaders, and executives throughout the United States. One common theme continues to surface: sustainable growth is rarely accidental.

Before investing in more leads, more marketing, or more people, ask yourself:

Do I have the systems necessary to support the growth I say I want?

Explosive growth starts with structure.

Maryam Habashi, M.Ed.  
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AGENT TO WATCH

# MIKE SHENKMAN



PHOTO BY LAUREN  
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## RESILIENCE, REAL ESTATE, AND COMMUNITY

Mike was born and raised in Southern California by a single mother. She was a REALTOR, a business owner, she knew how to hustle. As a child, Mike clung alongside his mom as she attended her open houses. Mike holds deep respect and admiration for her, knowing now, the sacrifice and hard work of holding multiple jobs to support the family.

Mike's natural talent for communication showed up early. While in high school in the late 1990s, he won a national contest through Channel One News, a subsidiary of ABC News at the time, which provided him the opportunity to work alongside and learn from broadcast talent such as Lisa Ling and Anderson Cooper, who were both part of the network during that era. The experience originally inspired him to pursue broadcast journalism.

Mike had not found a real sense of direction or purpose for his life as a young adult. He experimented and accumulated a wide range of life experiences while trying to figure out his path. He worked at Blockbuster Music, hosted a small late-night radio show in Orange County, California with a longtime friend, attended community college and spent several years working in the restaurant industry as both a waiter and bartender at places such as Olive Garden and Red Lobster.

One night in early 2001, while serving at a restaurant, Mike was handed a phone number written on the back of a \$13,000 commission check. Curious, he followed up on the opportunity,





found himself out of work and, for a period, living out of his car. Like many in the real estate and mortgage industries, he was forced to reinvent himself while searching for stability. During those years, he took on whatever work he could find, including construction jobs and personal training, while continuing to pursue real estate opportunities whenever possible, selling REO, short sales, etc.

In 2008, determined to create a better future, Mike re-enrolled at Mesa College. The counselor told him that his academic record was unlikely to earn him admission to a major university. Rather than accepting that assessment, he spent the next two and a half years taking classes, improving his grades, and proving his critics wrong. His efforts paid off when he earned admission to the University of California San Diego on a full scholarship.

which led him into the mortgage industry. He began his career in South Orange County as an underwriter before gradually working his way up to becoming a successful loan officer. Mike eventually dropped out of college.

In 2003, Mike relocated to San Diego, to manage one of the larger mortgage brokerage firms in the region. Over time, his career naturally expanded into real estate sales and in 2006, he began a property management company. Mike was concerned with making money and his social life at this time in his life.

**From Rock Bottom to High Honors**

The Great Recession dramatically altered the course of Mike's life. As the housing market collapsed in 2007, he

Mike initially attended UC San Diego as a way of escape from real estate and originally planned to attend law school. He started to realize Real Estate was much deeper than selling houses. He was able to help people through fair housing, land management, and legislation. He earned a bachelor's degree in both Sociology and Urban Studies & Planning and graduated Cum laude with High Distinction Honors from UC San Diego. He then enrolled in a dual master's degree program at the University of Southern California (USC). Because his daughter, career, and life were rooted in San Diego, he commuted to Los Angeles by train twice each week while continuing to work as a REALTOR. All while taking evening

shifts as a restaurant server. Many of his real estate contracts were negotiated and written during those train rides between San Diego and Los Angeles.

In 2014, Mike's mother was diagnosed with A.L.S. He continued balancing graduate school, work, and family responsibilities while supporting her through her illness. She passed away in November 2016. Just months later, Mike completed his graduate studies at USC. Completing a Master's in Planning (MPL), a Master's in Public Administration (MPA), and a Graduate Certificate in Political Management.

After a brief period to regroup and refocus, Mike returned to the industry and became the Broker of Record for Keller Williams Signature in San Diego. Over the following years, he developed a passion for coaching, training, and professional development, helping mentor and educate real estate professionals throughout the region.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mike began guest lecturing at UC San Diego. What started as an occasional teaching opportunity evolved into a larger role when the university invited him to join the program as an instructor. Today, he teaches real estate and urban development courses for UC San Diego and the University of San Diego (USD) while continuing his work in the real estate industry, bringing together the practical experience of a practitioner and the perspective of an educator.

**Empowering the Next Generation**

Mike took his advanced training in sociology, urban studies, and public administration and applied it directly to his real estate career. He started a successful property management company and became a fierce advocate for fair housing practices.

Returning to UC San Diego as a Professor was incredibly fulfilling for Mike, as he has become a part of an emerging program that serves as the only undergraduate program of its



kind in the UC system, earning high recognition from academic institutions and the California Department of Real Estate by combining social science, business, planning, and development into a multidisciplinary approach.

To say Mike loves teaching and helping others is an understatement. He heavily supports the Wesley House, a specialized housing program designed to protect and empower at-risk college student in danger of homelessness, giving them every opportunity to succeed.

Today, Mike serves as a leader across several major organizations, including:

- **Director** for the Pacific Southwest Association of Realtors (PSAR)
- **Director** for the California Association of Realtors (C.A.R.)
- **Trustee** for the C.A.R. Education and Scholarship Foundation
- **Treasurer** for the California Association of Real Estate Brokers (CAREB)
- **Head Instructor** for Agent Realty Schools, where he oversees licensing education for agents throughout California.

Currently, he works with Coastline Real Estate Group, part of the REAL brokerage, as an Associate Partner and trainer with founders Ray Fraser and Shaylie Gilliland.

Despite these heavy professional accolades, Mike takes equal, if not greater, pride in his roles closer to home. Whether acting as a soccer coach, Girl Scout Troop Dad, Cheer Dad, or room parent, his family comes first. He glows whenever mentioning his fifteen-year-old daughter, Brooklyn Rose, whom he proudly describes as the crown of his life.

It is abundantly clear that Mike Shenkman is someone who genuinely cares about the lasting impact real estate choices create for the well-being of families and the local communities he serves.

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# Jason Piske

## HOUSE OWL



BY JOSEPH COTTLE  
PHOTOS BY  
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MEG BOGART

**JASON PISKE** decided at age five that he wanted to help people buy houses. He still does. He just had to figure out a new way to get there.

When Jason Piske was five years old, his parents bought a brand-new build. He doesn't remember much about the house. What he remembers is the guy who worked at the model homes, Jim, who just hung out and helped people understand what they were getting into.

"I said, 'I want to be like Jim the model man,'" Jason says.

It took him a few decades to find his way there. But he got there.

Jason grew up around real estate—both his parents were realtors, coming into it later in life—so the industry was always in the background. He took a different path first, didn't get his own license until about ten years ago, and spent time in active sales before discovering what actually lit him up: sitting with first-time buyers who were completely overwhelmed and being the calm voice in the room.

"I got the most satisfaction out of helping first-time home buyers navigate everything," he says. "It's so complex and they're so stressed out, and I was like the calming presence to help them through."

That instinct led him somewhere unexpected. Three and a half years ago, his wife, Traci, came down with an incurable brain infection. She was in the hospital for six months, and when she came home, she couldn't be left alone. Jason couldn't leave the house to sell real estate—so he didn't.

A predecessor company brought him on as a risk manager, reading transaction documents and helping clients understand what they were actually signing. It was a different role, but the job underneath was the same one he'd always wanted: making sure people felt comfortable with one of the biggest decisions of their lives. When that company folded, he didn't look for a new one.

He started House Owl.

House Owl is real estate risk management—something that doesn't have a clean category yet, which might be exactly why it's needed.

Jason's primary focus is simple—he serves real estate agents by going through all of the documents on a transaction: the HOA package, the disclosures, and the fine print most buyers' hand back without reading. Then he relays that information to the buyer on a recorded call, so they understand what they're agreeing to and can make an informed decision. For sellers, he helps them work through their disclosures—something their agent technically isn't supposed to do.

House Owl handles all those small details so that agents don't have to. They can focus on what they do best and scale their business.

He's not a lawyer, and he's clear about that. He's not giving legal advice. He's giving professional guidance from someone who is himself a licensed realtor, which means he knows exactly what agents need and where the gaps are. He carries his own insurance. If he misses something, it falls on House Owl—not on the agent.

"I feel like I am part of their team," he says. "I'm here to make sure everybody closes escrow. I'm not here to ruin a deal."

The business model backs that up: he doesn't get paid until escrow closes. Same as the agent. Same as the TC. Same as everybody else at the table.

That alignment matters to him. He's not a vendor selling a service. He's a member of the transaction team who only wins when the transaction wins. Agents who've worked with him describe him the way he described Jim—as the calm guy who just helps people through.

Traci is doing better now. She'll never be fully cured, but she's improved enough that Jason can leave the house, take meetings, and grow the business.



“

**I'm here to make sure everybody closes escrow. I'm not here to ruin a deal.**

House Owl is two years old and building momentum, with a podcast and a growing reputation in San Diego.

When he's not working, you'll probably find him at Petco Park. Jason is, by his own description, obsessed with the Padres—partial season ticket holder for years, watches the games every day, and owns a full set of Friar robes he wears to games. His second date with Traci was a Padres game.

Ask him about Daniel Camarena hitting a grand slam off Max Scherzer and he'll still light up the same way he did when it happened.

"That's why I love baseball," he says. "That kind of stuff happens."

He started House Owl because the job needed to exist and he was the right person to do it. The goal, though, is exactly what it's always been—since he was five years old, standing in a model home, watching a guy named Jim help a family understand the house they were about to buy.

Make it simple. Make it clear. Help them feel okay about it.

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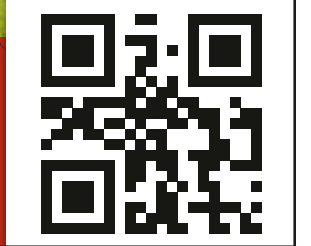


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**REAL PRODUCERS**



# Membership *HAS IT'S PRIVILEGES....* and *Risks*

BY ERIC R. GINDER, ESQ.

Whether it's the hallowed halls of Bushwood Country Club or the Steak of the Month Club, deep down we all want to be members of something exclusive; to have that key to door that only a select few get to walk through; to be asked the question: Pardon me, do you have any Grey Poupon?

Into this landscape of exclusivity, we now have Private Listing Networks (PLNs), which have become increasingly popular as an alternative to the traditional Multiple Listing Service (MLS). Of course, nobody in a PLN is going to ask you for fancy mustard, and you probably won't get invited to a round of golf with Judge Smails; it's not that kind of club. Instead, these platforms enable brokers to share property listings exclusively within a limited, often invitation-only, circle rather than publicly through the MLS.

## Pros of Private Listing Networks

- **Exclusivity and Privacy:** Sellers seeking discretion can benefit from limited access to their property information. This is ideal for high-profile clients or unique properties.
- **Control:** Brokers and sellers may have more control over who views the listing, potentially reducing unnecessary showings.
- **Targeted Marketing:** Listings can be marketed to a curated pool of qualified or trusted buyers, potentially streamlining the sales process.
- **Potential for Higher Commission:** Less competition from other brokers may allow for customized commission agreements.

## Cons of Private Listing Networks

- **Reduced Market Exposure:** Listing outside the MLS significantly limits the audience of potential buyers, which may reduce competition and ultimately impact sales price.
- **Fair Housing Concerns:** Limited access must be carefully managed to avoid discriminatory practices or violations of fair housing laws.
- **Broker Cooperation:** Foregoing MLS reduces broker cooperation and can alienate other agents who could bring qualified buyers.
- **Compliance Risks:** Failure to disclose to sellers the full implications of not listing on the MLS could lead to legal or ethical issues under California real estate regulations.

In other words, like most clubs, these have their upsides and downsides. In our world, though, these downsides can often come with DRE audit and a letter from an attorney. PLNs aren't really anything new; several years ago, a popular practice for some listing agents was to have their sellers foregoing the MLS for a period of time while the property was marketed to "a select group of know buyers and investors." Marketing materials suggested that this practice often led to the sellers receiving offers that would exceed offers procured through normal MLS advertising. I represented several brokers and agents in DRE inquiries about this practice in

which the Department wanted to see proof of the advertising claims and wanted to know of the sellers 1) were informed about the pros and cons delayed MLS advertising and "private buyer groups" and 2) knowingly agreed to this type of marketing plan.

Recommended Steps if Recommending Foregoing MLS for PLN

### 1 / Educate the Seller

- Clearly explain the differences between MLS and private listing networks.
- Discuss how limited exposure may affect the sale price and timeline.
- Review potential risks, including fewer buyer opportunities and possible legal considerations.

### 2 / Obtain Written Consent

- Document the seller's informed decision to forego MLS, outlining all discussed risks and benefits.
- Use clear, written disclosure forms specific to private listings.

### 3 / Compliance with Fair Housing and Ethics

- Ensure the limited listing is marketed without discriminatory restrictions.
- Confirm adherence to state laws and National Association of Realtors (NAR) ethical standards.

### 4 / Maintain Transparency

- Keep thorough records of all communications regarding the listing strategy.
- Disclose to all parties involved that the property is not listed on the MLS and the reasons why.

### 5 / Continued Market Monitoring

- Regularly reassess the effectiveness of using a private listing network.
- Be prepared to list on the MLS if market conditions or seller preferences change.
- There is actually data suggesting that PLN's and non-MLS marketing can net higher offers than traditional marketing. Unless you have access to this data and it fits your client's situation, I would not suggest making any claims that one method more money than the other. Present the pros and cons (in writing, of course) and let the seller decide.

### Conclusion

While private listing networks can offer valuable benefits, brokers must carefully weigh these against the potential drawbacks. It is imperative that brokers inform and protect their sellers through full disclosure, proper documentation, and adherence to legal and ethical standards in California.



# ALYSA FLORES

**ALYSA FLORES spent nearly a decade keeping aircraft carriers running. What she built in real estate in three years surprised everyone—except her.**

**BY JOSEPH  
COTTLE  
PHOTOS BY  
BRANDON  
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Alysa Flores left the Navy in May 2022, having served on three aircraft carriers, made rank to E6, earned three warfare devices, and supervised sailors. She was a machinist's mate in the engineering department. She knew how to do her part to keep a ship running and how to lead people under pressure. She was, by every measure, someone who had already figured out how to perform at a high level in a demanding environment.

Then she got her real estate license and closed 12 transactions in her first year.

She wasn't surprised. Everyone else was.

"I always use their underestimation as fuel," she says.

After high school, Alysa looked at her career options, and the armed forces stuck out as a way

to build a financial and educational foundation for the rest of her life. She enlisted in the Navy, spent nine months in Chicago for boot camp and school, and was stationed in San Diego in 2014. She served on the Ronald Reagan, the George Washington, and the Theodore Roosevelt—taking the George Washington around Cape Horn from San Diego to Virginia, with stops in Peru, Chile, and Brazil alongside a second deployment to the Middle East. She rose through the ranks fast, landing in a supervisory position at an age when most of her sailors had more time in service than she did.

But, after years of a grueling Navy schedule, she was tired of being tired.

"I was put into a leadership position at such a young age. Having to deal with the stress, worrying about their problems—their problems

were my problems. I just got tired of that."

She got out in May 2022 and had her real estate license by that fall. By January 2023, she was a full-time real estate agent.

She landed at a large national brokerage but soon realized it wasn't the right fit. After a couple of months, she found a mentor, switched brokerages, and within six weeks had her first lead and her first closed transaction.

That move turned into twelve transactions in year one, then twenty in year two. After twenty-seven transactions in year three, she's kept climbing.

She's now with Realty of America, and she approaches her business the same way she approached the Navy—methodically, with high expectations and no interest in shortcuts. She doesn't have a big social media presence. She's not chasing flash. What she has is a reputation built through genuine relationships and a referral network that generates 20 to 30 transactions a year.



"I feel like I'm just a normal person. I'm not one of those realtors who show up all over social media all flashy but might not produce," Alysa says.

One of the relationships she values most is with her Loan officer, Itzel Valdez, who also happens to be her best friend. They met briefly while both were on active duty, reconnected at shore duty, and discovered they had the same goal: get their real

estate licenses together. Her friend ended up going the mortgage route instead, and the partnership has been seamless ever since.

"I know I can count on her. If there is a problem, I know she will get the job done and give the best service to our clients. Not only is she my best friend, but I know how she works, and I love the way she works. It just works out," Alysa says.

"I ALWAYS USE THEIR UNDERESTIMATION AS

# FUEL."

There's a directness to how she talks about what drives her. She wants a better life. She's preparing for a family someday and wants to give her kids stability. She's a goal-oriented person and she's eager to achieve them.

When she's not working, she's at the gym, spending time with her dogs, or planning her next trip. She's been to five of the seven continents—a habit that started in the Navy—and has strong opinions about all of it: Dubai for the architecture and the spectacle of it, Italy because two weeks there still wasn't enough, Singapore for how impossibly clean everything is.

Her dogs are named after Game of Thrones characters. Renley is a Pomsky who's turning eight this year and learned to bark on command when Alysa says "Dracarys." Nymeria is a two-year-old Belgian Malinois who follows Alysa from room to room.

She came to San Diego in 2014 with the Navy. She built a career here on the same thing that kept her going through the ranks—the quiet, steady fuel of being underestimated, the drive to prove every doubter exactly wrong. She leverages it all now to help people achieve their dreams and real estate goals. ▀





# WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF REALTORS SAN DIEGO

Rockstars vs. Popstars!

PHOTOS BY DON ANDERSON INSIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

**B**ig thanks to our Popstars, Madeline Foley and Sarah Meester, and our Rock Stars, Tami Fuller and Maxine Gellens! What a great panel! Everyone loved seeing real estate perspectives from generational differences, and how these ladies overcome challenges to be the stars of real estate! Big thanks to The Sharpest Guy we know, Eric Gillman from Cutco, for MC'ing this event, and to Joy Parker of First Security Mortgage for being our moderator.



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