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Cover photo by Leah Wallace, Leah Ariel Photography

If you are interested in nominating people for certain stories, please email us at: joni@realproducersmag.com.



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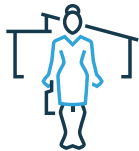


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STORY BY MADDIE PODISH
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(UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

From the outside, Geoffrey Whiteside's path into real estate may look intentional. Today, he is known throughout Hampton Roads as a top-producing agent, investor, and leader with Keller Williams Town Center. Alongside his business partner, Racheal Pridgen, he co-leads the area's top small real estate team, W|P Collective Homes, while also helping clients build wealth through real estate investing.

But Geoffrey never planned to become a REALTOR®. Long before he was closing deals, he was trying to build something for himself. "I started off as a real estate investor," he explains.

While serving in the Navy, Geoffrey began purchasing properties throughout Hampton Roads using the same investment strategies he now teaches his clients. He started by house-hacking with a VA loan, then gradually scaled into multifamily investing and larger apartment properties. Along the way, friends began asking how they could do the same. Before long, those conversations became a regular part of his life, with people reaching out for advice on financing, investing, and getting started in real estate.

Geoffrey then decided to get his license. The transition felt natural since he already understood the numbers behind investing, how to analyze opportunities, and the dynamics of the local market. In his first year as an agent, he closed roughly 40 transactions.

He credits much of his early success to building systems that could sustain his growing career. "I immediately hired a transaction coordinator, and my wife, Alexis, helped me with a lot of the admin items," he notes. That support became foundational as the business continued growing.

Originally from Columbus, Ohio, Geoffrey was a four-year football letter winner at the Naval Academy before serving six years in the Navy as a Surface Warfare Officer stationed at Naval Station Norfolk. Although Hampton Roads was not originally home, it quickly became the place where he planted roots, built a business, and started a family.



His connection to the area has become a major part of both his business and identity. Geoffrey and Racheal recently launched Hampton Roads Living, a social media platform dedicated to highlighting local restaurants, businesses, developments, and community spots throughout the region. In only a few months, the page has grown to more than 10,000 followers on Instagram. “There are so many incredible small businesses,” Geoffrey says. “We just love highlighting all the great things about Hampton Roads.”

Whether the market is shifting, slowing down, or speeding up, Geoffrey believes success comes more from discipline than emotion. “The market’s going to do what the market does,” he explains. “Our job is to stay consistent and put in the work.”

Growing up in Columbus, Geoffrey watched his mother run large daycare businesses while working tirelessly to provide for their family. He credits her entrepreneurial mindset and work ethic as major

“At the end of the day, we’re all going to end up in the same place. There’s no real rush. You’ve got to enjoy your life, your family, and your work.”

influences in his life. His father’s example also played a major role, showing him the value of consistency, responsibility, and doing whatever it takes to support your family. “I watched both of my parents work hard every day,” Geoffrey remembers.

His upbringing also shaped his desire to give back. Geoffrey openly shares the realities of growing up in the inner city. Today, he remains committed to supporting his hometown community and organizations such as the Wounded Warrior Project. “I like reaching back and helping people from where I came from,” he states.

As his business evolved, so did Geoffrey’s definition of success. Early on, success looked like non-stop hustle and helping as many clients as possible. Now, with a growing team and family, his focus has shifted toward building systems that allow him to provide exceptional service while still making room for family life.

Geoffrey and Rachael’s partnership works because each brings different strengths to the table. Geoffrey thrives in lead generation, investing conversations, and relationship building,



Photo by Morgan Barrera, Morgan Renee Photography, LLC

while Racheal focuses on client experience and operations. “We merged those two passions,” Geoffrey says. That balance has reinforced his long-term mindset toward business. “Running a business is kind of like investing—you have to stay consistent before you see real results,” he explains.

That long-term perspective shows up in nearly every part of his life. His mornings begin around 4:00 a.m., feeding baby Emory before transitioning into prayer, meditation, reading,

exercise, and focused work blocks before heading into the office. The routine reflects the same discipline that once carried him through military life and now fuels his business.

Geoffrey is careful not to lose sight of what matters most along the way. One of the biggest mantras he lives by is “Enjoy the Journey.” He explains, “At the end of the day, we’re all going to end up in the same place. There’s no real rush. You’ve got to enjoy your life, your family, and your work.”



Geoffrey with business partner Racheal Pridgen
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Greg Bell & Alvin Lapitan

The Broker

STORY BY JACKI DONALDSON
PHOTOS BY DARREN MYERS,
LEVEL UP VISUAL MEDIA

Some business partnerships start in a boardroom. Greg Bell and Alvin Lapitan built theirs on a golf course.

The two mortgage professionals met through mutual friends at Greenbrier Country Club, where many rounds of golf eventually led to conversations about business, the mortgage industry, and what they believed was possible.

One weekend in the summer of 2022, while golfing in Wintergreen, the conversation led to Alvin sharing that he might step away from the mortgage business after more than two decades. Greg remembers thinking, “There’s no reason to do that.” A few months later, after attending a mortgage conference together, they decided that Alvin would not step away and that neither of them would join another company. Instead, they would build one of their own.

They officially launched The Broker in 2023.

Less than four years later, it has become the second-largest mortgage brokerage



in the Hampton Roads metropolitan area by loan volume, growing from \$48 million in production during its first partial year to more than \$227 million in 2025 and on pace to exceed \$250 million this year. Their answer to how they’ve scaled so quickly is surprisingly simple. “We’re just a couple of good guys trying to do good business,” Alvin says.

Although their paths to the industry were different, both brought years of experience.

Born in Guam to a Navy family, Alvin moved to Hampton Roads at age 3 and has spent more than 21 years in the mortgage

industry. Along the way, he also built another successful business as owner of four Iron Asylum strength and conditioning gyms, serving approximately 8,500 members throughout Hampton Roads. Greg, the son of an Army serviceman, grew up in Chesapeake and spent more than a decade building and remodeling homes before transitioning into mortgage lending nearly 10 years ago. Both of their careers centered on helping people make informed decisions.

The way they do business sets them apart. Rather than being tied to a single institution, The Broker has

access to more than 100 lending partners, allowing the team to compare loan options and match buyers with the program that best fits their needs. “We’re just your locally owned mortgage experts,” Alvin says.

Greg compares the process to working with an independent insurance agent instead of purchasing directly from a single carrier. “Our job is to shop the scenario and see who’s going to have the best options, costs, and service,” he explains. That flexibility has become especially valuable in today’s changing mortgage market, but Greg believes experience matters



“We’re just a couple of good guys trying to do good business.”



just as much. “We know loan guidelines inside and out,” he says, because to him, a pre-approval is a promise to buyers that they can move forward with confidence. “Every pre-approval I’ve sent out has gotten to the closing table,” he notes.

That commitment to doing things the right way extends beyond buyers to the real estate professionals they serve. “The relationships are a two-way street,” Alvin says. Rather than simply asking agents for referrals,

Greg and Alvin invest in educational events, client appreciation opportunities, community partnerships, and ongoing support that helps REALTORS® better serve their own clients.

Alvin and Greg realize they may not be the ideal choice for everyone. “At times, we might not be the best option,” Greg says. “We’re not here to just close a loan to make a paycheck.” Instead, they’ve built their reputation on putting clients first, even when that means

recommending another solution. That philosophy has fueled repeat business and remarkable growth. What began with just a handful of employees has expanded into a team of approximately 30, with strong retention and a culture centered on relationships.

Alvin even extends memberships at his Iron Asylum gyms to employees, encouraging health and wellness alongside professional development. The team regularly works

out together, gathers for office lunches, and has created what both describe as a family atmosphere.

Outside the office, family is the priority for both partners.

Alvin and his wife, Aimee, have been married for 21 years and are raising 14-year-old twins, Anderson and Aniston, while cheering on their oldest son, Alonzo, in his career as a project manager in Washington, D.C. Their home also includes two very different dogs: Ash, a miniature schnauzer, and Ace, a growing Cane Corso puppy expected to top 150 pounds.

Greg and his wife, Marjon, recently celebrated nearly a decade of marriage and stay busy raising their children, Emerson and Roya. A lifelong adventurer who has completed an Ironman triathlon and explored everything from surfing to rock climbing, Greg now spends much of his free time golfing and making memories with his family, including Happy, the family’s goldendoodle.

The next round of golf is never too far away for Greg and Alvin. But somewhere between the tee box and the 18th green, they’re just as likely to be talking about their team, new ideas, and the next family they’ll help achieve homeownership as they are about their score. ▀



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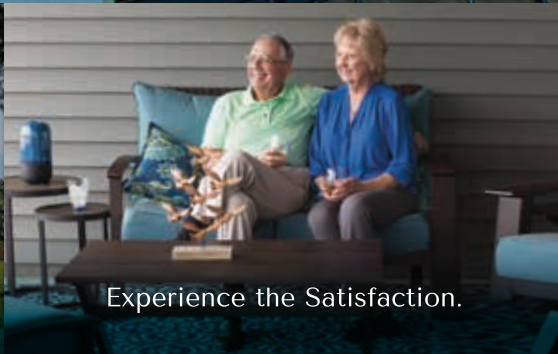
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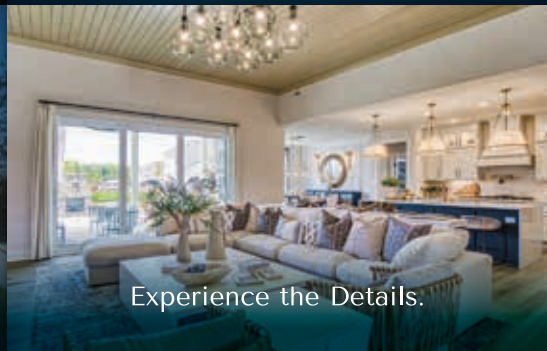
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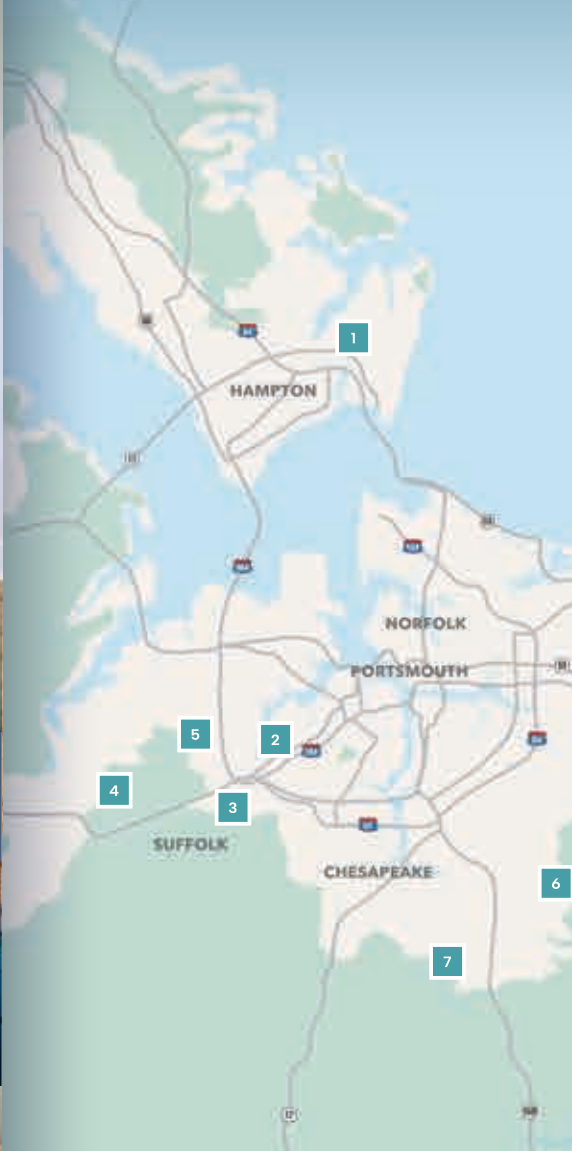


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Iron Valley Real
Estate Prestige

STORY BY MADDIE PODISH
PHOTOS BY LEAH WALLACE,
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Edgar Muñoz

Edgar Muñoz has reinvented his life more than once—first as a young father determined to leave behind the only world he had ever known. Then as a Navy sailor. Then as a REALTOR®. While every chapter has looked different, every decision has been about creating a better future for his family.

Today, Edgar is helping lead one of Hampton Roads’ fastest-growing brokerages as owner and principal broker of Iron Valley Real Estate Prestige.

Growing up in Southern California, Edgar watched his father invest in commercial

buildings and rental properties in Mexico while also engaging in organized crime. As Edgar got older, he found himself heading down the same path—until becoming a father himself changed everything.

Steadfast in building a different future for his daughter, Johanna, Edgar searched for a way out. After trying a few traditional jobs, he found the opportunity he needed through the U.S. Navy. Looking back on his service, Edgar recalls, “I joined because of my child, and I needed to get away from everything I knew.”

Edgar entered the U.S. Navy in 1999, serving eight years and completing three deployments. During that time, he met his wife, Cookie, after the two struck up a friendship while attending a football game together. Then, in 2003, just one week after returning home from deployment, Edgar’s father was murdered.

The loss was heartbreaking, but by then, Edgar had already chosen a different direction. The discipline he found through the military and the family he was building with Cookie solidified the legacy he wanted to build. Today, nearly 20 years into their marriage, the couple is raising five children—Johanna (29), Madilyn (25), Kayleen (13), Isaac (10), and Anthony (8). They recently welcomed their first granddaughter, Gabriela.

Ask Edgar the secret to a lasting marriage, and he doesn’t hesitate. “Communication, 1,000 percent,” he emphasizes. “It’s not just about talking. It’s about understanding how the other person receives what you’re saying.”

One of Edgar’s favorite investments had nothing to do with real estate. Early in his real estate career, he



***If you're
thinking about
the commission
first, you've
already lost.
Learn the
business first,
and everything
else will come.***

bought a home for his mother and invited her to move from California so she could help care for his children. Looking back, it's one of the decisions he's most proud of. "She's worked so hard to provide for me," he shares. "Being able to give back to her now is really special."

Edgar doesn't sugarcoat his early days in real estate. "The first six months, I didn't sell a thing," he admits. "Real estate is tough. People have to get out of the mindset that it's a job. I had no network. I had to go out and hunt to get business." Edgar knocked on doors,

hosted open houses, and outworked the competition until someone noticed.

His persistence led him to Iron Valley Real Estate. Originally planning to learn the franchise model before opening his own brokerage, Edgar instead found a culture that

felt like home. "The biggest secret to Iron Valley is we have no secrets," he notes. "Anything you want to know about what I'm doing, I'll tell you." In 2022, he became part of the ownership group at Iron Valley Real Estate Prestige, where he now helps mentor agents while continuing to grow the brokerage throughout Hampton Roads.

Edgar believes: "Everything you want is outside your comfort zone. With education, a lot of training and a lot of reps, your confidence increases." Whether he's coaching a brand-new agent or a seasoned producer, his advice never changes. "If you're thinking about the commission first, you've already lost," he comments. "Learn the business first, and everything else will come."

Outside the office, Edgar enjoys restoring classic cars, spending time with his family, and challenging himself. After losing more than 65 pounds over the past year, he's focused on setting an example for his children. Traveling has become one of Edgar's favorite rewards. "I want the kids to be exposed to everything outside of America if possible," he says. "I want them to see just how much the world has to offer."

Edgar has never tried to be anyone but himself. "I'm just me," he shares. "However I come off, I come off. Business is business. I work hard, I carry myself with character, and that's what matters." That same mindset shapes how he defines success today. "Success is my children looking up to me, my wife being my best friend, and living without regrets," he stresses. ■



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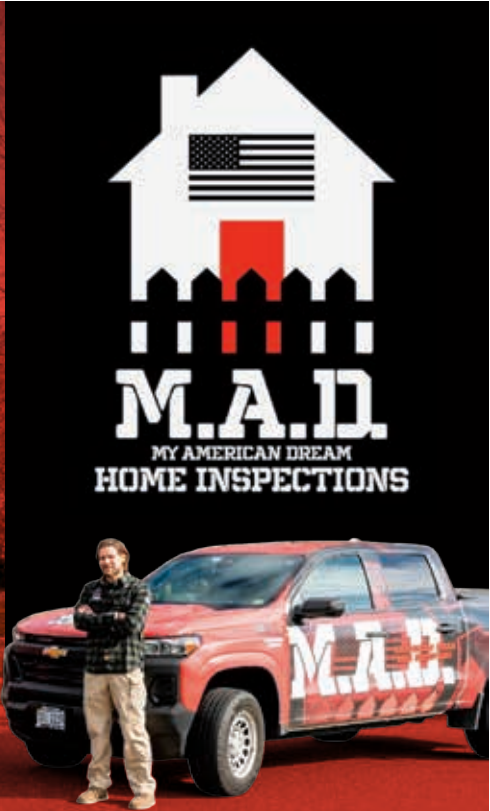
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Tom & Dariya MILAN

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STORY BY MADDIE PODISH
PHOTOS BY LEAH WALLACE, LEAH ARIEL PHOTOGRAPHY



When Tom and Dariya Milan first met six years ago, neither could have predicted they would build a thriving real estate business side by side. Today, the husband-and-wife team has found that the same qualities that strengthen their marriage also strengthen the experience they provide every client they serve.

Tom's path into real estate began more than 18 years ago after watching a home across the street from him transform

from a fixer-upper into a profitable investment. Intrigued, he began flipping houses and earned his real estate license to market his renovation projects. He quickly discovered that helping buyers and sellers was just as rewarding as renovating homes, and his investment business grew into a full-time real estate career.

Years later, after Dariya moved to the United States from Ukraine, Tom encouraged his future wife to consider real estate. "She has a very warm personality that makes people naturally like talking to her," he says with a smile. "I felt if I could teach her the basics, she'd be really good at it."

Working together came naturally. Rather than competing for the same responsibilities, they quickly learned to lean into each other's strengths. Tom became the strategist. His years of experience, background in construction, and knack for creative problem-solving help him navigate complicated transactions and find solutions when unexpected challenges arise. Dariya thrives on building relationships, staying connected with clients, and managing the details that keep every transaction moving smoothly. "We know what we do best, and together, we're creating a very nice team that gets results," Dariya shares.

The balance they have found in their marriage carries over into their business. Tom's strategic mindset complements Dariya's relationship-first approach, allowing each to focus on what they do best. Together, they believe buying or selling a home is about far more than reaching the closing table. Their goal is to create an experience clients remember long after the keys change hands. "The best thing you can do to get clients is give them an amazing experience," Tom explains. "If you go to a great restaurant, you tell your friends about it. Real estate works the same way."





That philosophy has led them to go above and beyond in ways many clients never expect. Tom recalls purchasing and arranging the installation of a brand-new dishwasher for a single mother in a tight spot after hers unexpectedly failed immediately following closing. It wasn't about the appliance. It was about showing a client they genuinely cared.

Their commitment doesn't end once the paperwork is signed. Former clients continue reaching out for contractor recommendations, renovation advice, market updates, and future moves. Many return to buy or sell again, while others happily recommend Tom and Dariya to family and friends. For Dariya, those returning relationships are the greatest measure of success. She shares, "Our definition of success is when people come back to us or write reviews that come from the heart because it means we did our job right."

While serving clients remains their highest priority, the couple is also investing in the future of how people search for homes. Drawing on his background in computer programming, Tom spent the past seven months building VAHome.com from the ground up rather than relying on a traditional real estate website template. The platform features direct MLS data, AI-powered home searches, aerial flyovers, flood information, neighborhood information, military-focused resources, and interactive tools to help buyers make informed decisions long before they ever schedule a showing. "Our goal is to build the best home-search experience we can for Hampton Roads by creating something that truly serves buyers," Tom notes. For him, the website is simply another way he and Dariya continue serving their clients.

"Our definition of success is when people come back to us or write reviews that come from the heart because it means we did our job right."



Outside of real estate, giving back is an important part of their lives. Dariya serves on the board of the Tidewater Ukrainian Cultural Association as a director of events, helping organize events and support families who have relocated to the area. Having experienced leaving home and building a life in a new country, she's passionate about helping others feel welcomed and connected. Together, they also enjoy spending time with their four children, visiting family in Maryland and Ukraine whenever they can, and taking advantage of everything coastal living has to offer.

Whether they're helping military families relocate, volunteering in the community, or guiding first-time buyers through one of life's biggest decisions, Tom and Dariya's focus remains the same. Dariya smiles as she sums up the heart behind everything they do. "As a family, our goal is simple: let our family help yours." 🍷



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The One Asset Every Agent Must Protect

BY AUBRÉA GREEN, SVP OF COMMUNICATIONS & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, COASTAL VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (COAVAR)

Let's play a game.

You receive a call from a prospect you've never met who wants to see a vacant property right away. What do you do?

A. Meet them at the property after verifying their identity.

B. Let someone know where you're going, who you're meeting, and when you'll be back.

C. Use a screening tool to learn more about the prospect before the appointment.

D. All of the above.

The answer is obvious, right?

Yet according to the National Association of REALTORS®' 2024 Member Safety Residential Report, 40% of REALTORS® reported meeting a new or prospective client alone at a secluded location or property within the past year. The same report found that 22% experienced a situation that made them fear for their personal safety or the security of their personal information, most often during open houses, showings, or after threatening or inappropriate communications.

Most real estate professionals know what they should do. The challenge is putting those practices into action when business gets busy. Safety often gets attention

during September's REALTOR® Safety Month, but the risks do not disappear when the calendar changes.

Real estate remains one of the few professions where meeting strangers, entering vacant properties, working irregular hours, and sharing personal contact information are routine parts of the job, which is why safety should never be a once-a-year conversation. It should be part of every showing, every open house, and every client interaction.

Fortunately, today's agents have more resources available than ever before. A growing sector of property technology, or proptech, is helping bridge what industry experts call the safety gap. New tools allow agents to verify identities, screen prospective clients, share their whereabouts, and quickly request help if they feel threatened. As highlighted in a recent NAR article, these technologies are transforming the way real estate professionals approach personal safety in the field.

Through membership in the Virginia Association of REALTORS®, agents and brokers receive complimentary access to FOREWARN. This safety application helps agents verify identities, review criminal history information, and validate details provided by prospective

clients using only a name or phone number. The platform provides real-time intelligence so REALTORS® can make more informed decisions before stepping into a showing appointment.

Think about that for a moment. A tool that can help you better understand who you are meeting before you arrive at a property is not just a convenience. It is a business advantage and a personal safety resource. And for REALTORS®, it is included as part of membership. This is where the REALTOR® difference becomes clear.

Many agents think of REALTOR® membership primarily in terms of the Code of Ethics, advocacy efforts, or professional development opportunities. Those benefits are certainly important. But membership also delivers practical resources to help you run a safer, smarter business. FOREWARN is one example. The REALTOR® Safety Program and its safety training, webinars, best practices, and member resources are others. Together, they provide layers of protection that can make a real difference in the field.

The NAR report found that only 25% of REALTORS® were aware of the REALTOR® Safety Program, yet 66% of those who completed a REALTOR® safety course said they felt more prepared for unknown

situations afterwards. Many professionals may be overlooking resources already available through REALTOR® membership.

Whether you are already a REALTOR® or a real estate professional considering membership, safety is another reason to be part of the REALTOR® family. The best agents understand that success is not just about generating leads and closing transactions. It is also about protecting yourself while doing the work.

Being a REALTOR® means belonging to an organization that advocates for your industry, invests in your professional growth, and provides tools that help keep you safe. That is not just a membership benefit. That is peace of mind.

Drafted with AI assistance

Sources

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- Tackling the Safety Gap in Real Estate Showings | National Association of REALTORS®
- FOREWARN - Virginia REALTORS®



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FAQS

WELCOME TO REAL PRODUCERS!

Here, we answer frequently asked questions about this publication. We're always open to connecting about this community.

WHO RECEIVES REAL PRODUCERS MAGAZINE?

South Hampton Roads Real Producers: This publication reaches the Top 500 agents across South Hampton Roads, from Smithfield to Sandbridge and into North Carolina. Rankings are based on REIN-MLS volume from January 1 through December 31 of the previous year, with the list resetting annually.

Peninsula Real Producers: This edition follows the same criteria but serves Peninsula/Williamsburg agents, with

distribution to the Top 300. We identify agents by their broker's MLS location. Please get in touch with us if (a) your MLS office is outside the region, but you primarily work in South Hampton Roads or the Peninsula, or (b) you'd prefer to be associated with a different region than your MLS designation.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED?

A: Anyone in the Top 500 can nominate agents, teams, brokers, businesses, or themselves. Office



leaders may also submit nominations. We rely on your input to discover stories, as we don't know everyone. While we can't guarantee features, we encourage you to connect with our team, support fellow top producers, and attend private events.

WHAT IS THE COST TO BE FEATURED?

A: Features are completely free, thanks to our preferred partners.

WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Preferred partners are businesses featured

in the magazine index who actively support this community. They appear in each issue, attend events, and engage with our network. Every partner is recommended and vetted by agents—we do not work with businesses that haven't earned your trust. Our goal is to build a strong, connected network of agents and affiliates.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: To recommend a trusted local business, email joni@realproducersmag.com.

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