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SEPTEMBER 2026

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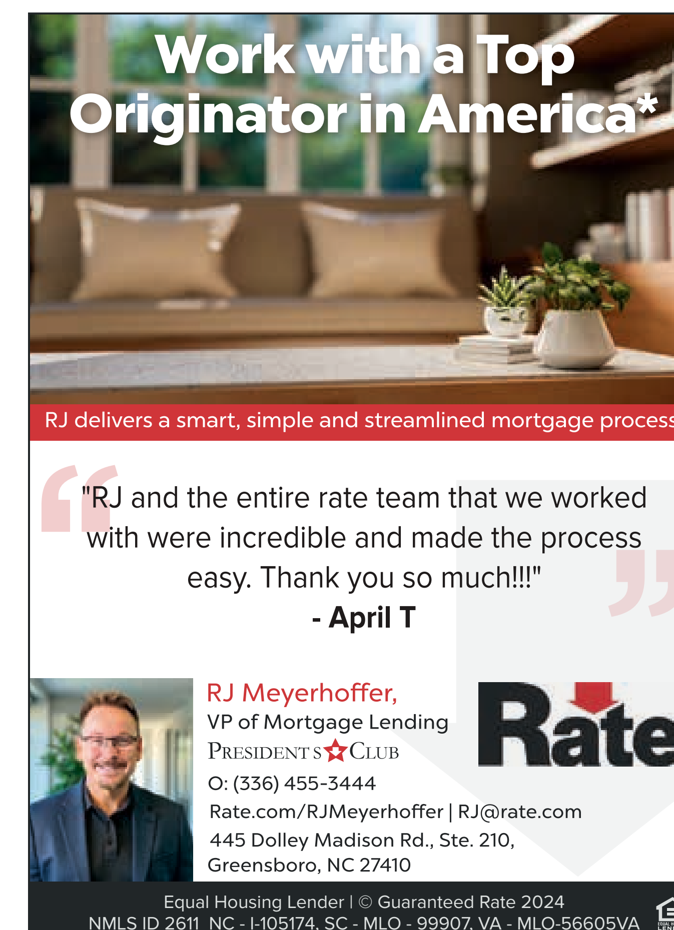


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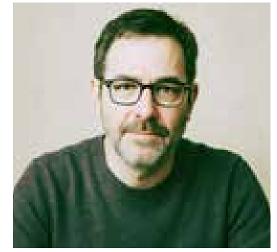

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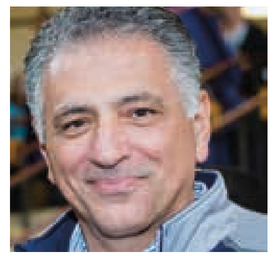

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Emily Bowman

Somebody else's deadline, & the agent who meets it.

BY JOE LARZ
PHOTOS BY BRIAN ANTHONY

Plenty of Emily Bowman's clients have never stood inside the house they're buying. They're moving to North Carolina against a start date at a new job and can't fly in for every inspection, so Emily goes instead.

She sits through the inspection review, walks the house with blue tape, and reports back to a buyer trusting her eyes over their own.

What she's protecting on those files isn't only the money.

"I want to make sure that I'm not only protecting their money, but protecting their time," she says. "We're not getting them into a situation that could end up messing up that timeline."

She learned that on the first deal she ever wrote. Her client was a veteran buying her first home, sent over by a lender, and relocating. Emily was still in Charlotte then, still in school and working that market, and the file moved before she had time to be nervous about it.

Showings, contract and closing all landed inside a month, and buyers arriving on somebody else's deadline have been her focus since.

Before any of that, she taught preschool.

Her parents flipped houses while she was growing up, and the flipping never held her interest.

What she liked came at the end, when the family walked through properties and weighed one against another. An incident at work convinced her that teaching wasn't going to be her career, and she moved to Charlotte to study communications at UNC Charlotte.

An internship in sales and marketing sorted out the rest: she hated cold calling and loved marketing, digital marketing above all.

Her dad had been watching all of it.

"Why don't you go into real estate?" he told her. "You've always loved it, and I think that you would be good at it."

Others had said the same for years. She sat with it a while, then got licensed over one summer break, pre-licensing course and all, inside a month.

Getting licensed turned out to be the easy part. Business came faster than the systems to hold it, and she was answering emails at eleven at night and waking at dawn for the texts that came in overnight.

The days ran together.

"Burnout is very real, and I experienced that very quickly, and thought that real estate wasn't for me," she says. "This was not what I wanted to do and how I wanted to live my life."

For a while she believed she had picked the wrong career. What she needed was smaller: time blocking, boundaries around the day, a few hours held back for herself. It felt like slowing down and wasn't.

"When I took a little bit of time and really started prioritizing my personal health and my mental health, that's really when my business skyrocketed," she says. "When you pour into your personal life, it also shows in your professional."

Emily had bet on social media early, and for months it produced no client she could trace back to it. She kept posting. The return arrived in the least dramatic way available, in

coffee shops and parking lots, when people she'd never met started placing her face.

"They'd be like, you're that real estate agent," she says.

Recognition compounds in a business built on relationships.

"I've always intentionally sought out rooms where I'm the smallest fish."

Communications gave her the language and teaching gave her the habit of breaking a process down from start to finish, which is what the out-of-state buyers need. They aren't new to real estate. They're new to how North Carolina does it, and that gap is where deals go sideways.

Her week has a shape now. She stacks administrative work into one day so the rest can happen out in the community, and a good one starts over coffee with a new client or a local business owner.

Showings take what's left.

Hank and Saylor come along often enough that strangers greet them by name, and the dachshund and the toy poodle turn up on her feed beside the coffee shops, wineries and breweries she likes.

"Now I have people that are not even going to be ready to buy for another two or three years, but they follow me because I'm recommending all the things that they love," she says.

Emily wants to build a team over the next few years and bring some of Charlotte with her, since the larger market was using technology she hasn't seen take hold here. The tools interest her less than the people she'd hand them to.

She remembers being told she was too young to be taken seriously and that building on social media was a waste of time. She'd like to tell young agents the opposite.

> **"Whatever it is that you are willing to give 110 to is what is going to succeed. Most people give up before they get to that point."**

"Whatever it is that you are willing to give 110 to is what is going to succeed," she says. "Most people give up before they get to that point."

She still walks into rooms where she's the least experienced person there, and she picks them deliberately, on the theory that who you surround yourself with is who you become. Most of what she takes from them costs nothing but the willingness to ask what everyone else won't.

The team she's planning would put her on the other side of that room. She has never had patience for the six months people spend perfecting an idea before acting on it, which makes a few years sound conservative.


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THE INVESTOR CLIENT LOOP:

How Good Management Turns Tenants Into Buyers and Owners Into Repeat Sellers

BY ALEKA DEGRAAF

A managed property isn't a single transaction. It's two ongoing relationships, a tenant and an owner, and both eventually lead back to a real estate closing. Here's why the quality of management in between determines who gets that call.

Most agents think of a rental property as a closed file the day the investor signs. In reality, closing day opens two new relationships that run for years afterward: the owner who now needs the asset managed, and the tenant who now needs somewhere to live.

Both of those relationships eventually point back toward another real estate transaction.

The only question worth asking is whether they point back to you.

It's a question worth taking seriously, because the timeline on both sides is longer than most agents assume. An investor doesn't typically buy one property and disappear. A tenant doesn't typically rent for a year and then vanish from the market.

Both are in motion for years after the closing that brought them into an agent's orbit, and what happens to them during that stretch shapes whether the next transaction comes back around.

The Tenant Side of the Loop

The path from renter to homeowner has stretched out considerably. First-time buyers made up just 21% of all home purchases in the most recent NAR data, the lowest share on record since NAR began tracking in 1981, and the typical first-time buyer is now 38 years old, up from 29 in 1981.

Separate research on the first-time buyer market puts the typical down payment savings timeline at around seven years. A recent national survey also found that 62% of Americans now consider buying a home in 2026 unrealistic given current affordability, up sharply from under half the year before.

None of that means renters have given up on ownership. It means the runway is longer, which means the average tenant now spends more years as a renter than in previous decades, often inside the same rental relationship the whole time.

That's a meaningful stretch of time for a tenant to form an impression of the people behind the property they live in, and the research on what actually drives that impression is fairly consistent: tenants rarely leave over rent alone.

Poor communication and slow maintenance response show up again and again as the real drivers of dissatisfaction, and one industry study found tenants who rate their landlord's communication as excellent renew their leases at a rate roughly 45% higher than tenants who rate it poorly.

That gap matters for more than retention. A tenant who's treated professionally for years, whose maintenance requests get handled and whose lease renewal is a smooth conversation rather than a scramble, is a tenant who associates that experience with competence.

Not every tenant becomes a buyer, and plenty never will. But the ones who eventually do remember who made renting easy, and they remember it at exactly the moment they start asking people they trust for a referral to an agent.

The Owner Side of the Loop

Owners are the more direct half of the loop, and the data on their behavior is clear. A 2026 rental owner survey found that 58% of landlords plan to acquire additional rental property or complete a 1031 exchange this year, while only 4% plan to sell.

Separately, NAR's 2026 Generational Trends report shows the housing market is increasingly driven by equity-rich, repeat buyers and sellers, with baby boomers alone now accounting for roughly 42% of all home purchases, who roll proceeds from one property into the next rather than exiting the market after a single deal.

Put simply, the investor who buys one rental property is statistically likely to buy another, and the owner who eventually sells is more often reinvesting than cashing out entirely. Both of those moments are transactions.

An owner who trusts the team managing their asset, meaning the property manager keeping it filled and the agent who made the introduction in the first place, has no real reason to shop for a new team when the next opportunity comes along.

Trust, once it's established across a few years of steady reporting and few surprises, becomes its own form of retention.

Where the Loop Breaks

The loop only works if the management holding it together is solid, and the financial stakes of getting that wrong are higher than most owners expect going in. Tenant turnover is the single largest operational challenge landlords report, cited by 42% of owners ahead of maintenance costs, pricing, or regulation, according to the same 2026 rental owner survey.

Industry cost studies consistently put the price of a single turnover event somewhere between $1,000 and $5,000 once lost rent, cleaning, repairs, and re-leasing costs are added up, and a property with a pattern of turnover multiplies that figure across a portfolio fast.

Every unplanned move-out resets the tenant relationship to zero and puts the owner's cash flow at risk in the same motion. Enough of that, and an owner doesn't just get frustrated with a property manager. They start questioning the whole team, including the agent who made the introduction, and they take their next deal elsewhere, sometimes without ever saying why.

This is the part of the loop that's easy to overlook from the sales side. The referring agent isn't just being judged on the property they helped an investor acquire. They're being judged, months and years later, on whether that investor's actual experience owning the property matched the confidence the agent projected at the closing table.

A smooth ownership experience reflects well on everyone who touched the deal. A rough one does the opposite, regardless of who's actually responsible for the maintenance delay or the vacancy.

Keeping the Loop Turning

At Fortified Dreams Property Solutions, we look at every managed property as the middle chapter of two relationships that started with an agent and are meant to end with one too.

A well-managed property keeps an owner acquiring instead of second-guessing, keeps a tenant's day-to-day experience positive enough to renew, and keeps both of them thinking of the same team when they're ready for what's next, whether that's a second property, a 1031 exchange, or their own first home.

None of that happens by accident. It happens because someone is answering the maintenance call quickly, keeping the owner informed before they have to ask, and treating a renter renewal conversation with the same care as a new lease. That's the work that turns a single closing into a loop instead of a dead end.

If you're placing investor clients and want a management partner that treats the relationship as ongoing rather than transactional, we'd welcome the conversation.


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The Housing Market *Is More Complex* Than the Headlines

BY RJ MEYERHOFFER, VP OF MORTGAGE LENDING

Turn on the news, scroll through social media, or read the latest housing report, and you'll probably come away more confused than informed.

One headline says the market is slowing. Another says home prices continue to rise. One expert insists buyers finally have the upper hand, while another says sellers are still in control.

Mortgage rates have climbed, yet some homes continue to receive multiple offers. Existing home sales have cooled, while many builders are still moving inventory by offering aggressive incentives.

So who's right?

The truth is…they all are.

The biggest mistake we can make in today's market is trying to explain a complex market with a simple headline. The reality is much more complicated than that.

Over more than three decades in the mortgage business, I've worked through falling interest rates, rising interest rates, housing booms, housing downturns, and just about every type of market in between.

It certainly wasn't the hot spring and summer market many of us had hoped for. To me, the best way to describe it is that it felt uneven. The market never seemed to establish the consistent momentum we typically expect during the busiest months of the year. Activity would pick up, optimism would return, and then just as quickly things would slow again.

That stop-and-start rhythm made this market feel unlike any spring or summer I've experienced in quite some time.

In conversations with Realtors, lenders, and other industry professionals, I've heard the same descriptions come up time and time again.

"It's challenging."

"It's out of whack."

And perhaps the word I've heard most often…

"Weird."

That inconsistency has made today's market unusually difficult to interpret. A single strong week doesn't necessarily signal a trend, and a slower week doesn't necessarily mean the market is losing steam. That's why broad national headlines often fail to capture what's actually happening on the ground.

Mortgage rates certainly remain part of the story. In fact, by the end of July, the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate reached its highest level in roughly a year. But today's affordability challenges extend well beyond interest rates.

Buyers are also navigating higher homeowners insurance costs, increasing property taxes in many areas, HOA dues, and the rising cost of everyday living. The conversation has shifted from simply asking, "What's the interest rate?" to asking, "Can I comfortably afford the monthly payment?"

Another factor shaping today's market is the growing influence of new construction.

Many builders are offering temporary mortgage rate buydowns, closing cost assistance, design upgrades, and other incentives that individual resale sellers simply can't match.

Today, many resale sellers aren't just competing with the house down the street—they're competing with a builder offering a mortgage rate buydown and thousands of dollars in incentives. That has changed the conversation for buyers and created new challenges for sellers.

Condo financing has also become even more complex—if that were even possible.

Recent changes to condominium review requirements have added another layer of due diligence for lenders, buyers, and agents alike. Today, it's no longer enough for the buyer to qualify. Increasingly, the condominium project has to qualify as well. That means additional documentation, more detailed reviews of association finances, insurance coverage, reserves, and, in some cases, longer timelines.

For agents working with condo buyers, understanding these changes has never been more important.

Negotiation has returned to many transactions—and that's one of the healthiest developments we've seen in today's market.

Seller concessions have become more common. Home-sale contingencies are making a comeback. Buyers often have more opportunities to negotiate than they did just a few years ago. Yet well-priced, well-maintained homes continue to generate strong interest.

Every transaction has its own story. Every buyer has different priorities. Every seller has different motivations. Success in today's market requires understanding those individual circumstances—not assuming every transaction follows the same script.

That's why I believe experience has become more valuable than ever.

Today's buyers need more than someone who can quote today's mortgage rate. They need advisors who understand financing options, builder incentives, seller concessions, affordability, and how all of those pieces fit together. Likewise, today's sellers need realistic pricing strategies based on today's market—not yesterday's.

The professionals who will thrive in this environment won't necessarily be the ones making the boldest predictions about where mortgage rates are headed next month.

They'll be the ones asking better questions, understanding their local market, and helping clients make informed decisions based on their individual circumstances rather than a national headline.

Maybe that's the biggest lesson of today's housing market.

We need to stop asking whether it's a buyer's market or a seller's market.

That's the wrong question.

The better question is this:

What market is your client actually in?

Because the answer depends on far more than a headline.


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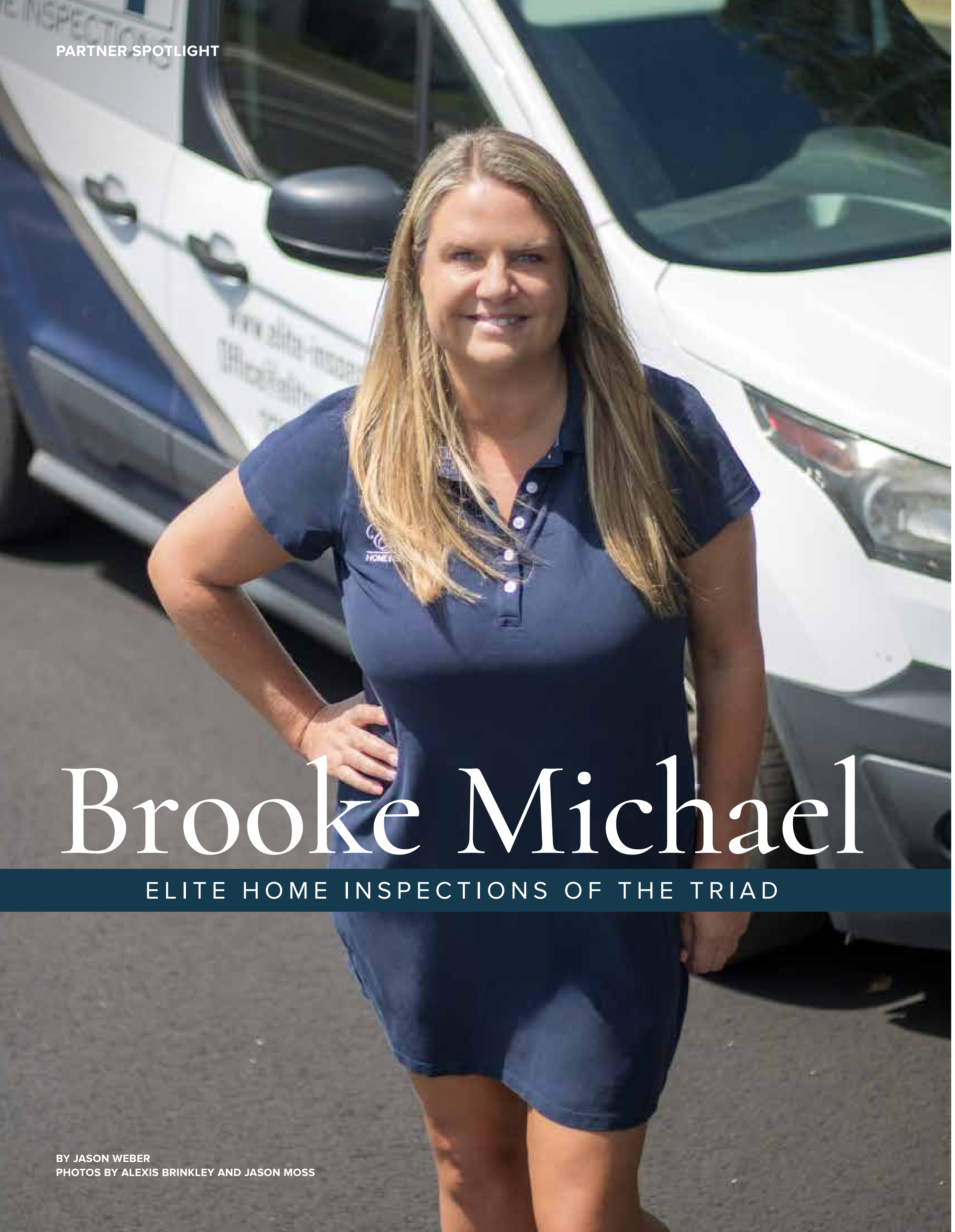

Brooke Michael

ELITE HOME INSPECTIONS OF THE TRIAD

BY JASON WEBER
PHOTOS BY ALEXIS BRINKLEY AND JASON MOSS

The call comes in the way those calls always do. An agent is on the other end, the loan is FHA, the file needs a water test, and nobody remembered until today.

There's panic attached to it.

Brooke Michael doesn't match the energy on the other end of the line. She takes it down about fifteen notches instead, tells the agent it's not a problem, and starts arranging it.

"I don't usually get panicked," she says. "I've been in emergency situations. This is not one of those."

She isn't speaking figuratively. Before she owned Elite Home Inspections of the Triad, Brooke spent 26 years as a registered nurse, which explains most of the rest of it. Nursing taught her to prioritize under pressure and to hand people difficult information in language they can use.

"As a nurse, I had to give things in layman's terms," she says. A home inspection can be daunting to a buyer, and she keeps explaining until the person on the other side is comfortable enough to ask questions.

That habit is worth money to the agents who refer her. A large share of the complaints in this business come from buyers who never understood what an inspection covers, so Brooke says so up front. When a client later finds the sprinkler system doesn't work, they already know it was never part of the inspection.

When something does go sideways, she takes it off the agent's desk entirely.

"I deal with it directly," she says. "I don't turn away a phone call. I don't act like something is not my problem and just brush it under the rug."

She left nursing because she'd hit a wall she recognized, having maxed out her ability to make a difference and still feel fulfilled by it. Her family also needed more of her schedule than a hospital was going to give back. Home inspections kept the part she wanted, which was being useful to people on a deadline.

Elite isn't the first company she built. She owned one with her ex-husband and helped grow it to a level she was proud of, and when the marriage ended she had a decision to make.

"I'm very good at building relationships. I'm good at keeping relationships," she says, so she went out on her own. As far as she knows, hers is the only woman-owned home inspection company in the area, and plenty of people told her that was a problem waiting to happen.

"A lot of people were saying, oh, that's not going to work," she says. "But it has."

"I'm not actually a licensed home inspector. I'm just a very good business owner."

That's what she'll tell you before you ask. Brooke doesn't climb into the crawlspace herself. Her three inspectors do that, and she runs everything that

“I’m not changing. I’m still out here as strong as ever, offering the same services and the same quality.”

determines whether they show up on time, report clearly, and follow through.

The past few months have tested that arrangement. Her brother, who’d been with the company from the beginning and held a good number of the relationships himself, left to build something of his own, and a few agents followed.

Brooke’s read on it is generous. People hit a point every six or seven years where something pushes them toward a change, and his came due.

She’s making sure the market knows the name on the license never changed.

“I’m not changing. I’m still out here as strong as ever, offering the same services and the same quality,” she says.

Behind the scenes, Brooke is focused on strengthening relationships and finding new ways to serve the real estate community. She enjoys meeting with brokerages face-to-face, sharing a meal, building camaraderie, and helping agents better understand the inspection process.

She also has several new initiatives in the works aimed at expanding her outreach, building new relationships, and continuing to grow the business while maintaining the level of service her clients have come to expect.

That same mindset is reflected in Elite’s expanding services.

Based in Greensboro, Elite covers the Triad, with weekend appointments when a timeline demands it. Along with home inspections, the company handles radon, mold, termite and water testing, and it recently brought sewer scoping in-house after clients kept asking.

Jason Moss is a licensed home inspector who brings years of experience in manufacturing, lighting, customer service, and the construction industry to his work. Before becoming an inspector, he worked as a shipping and receiving supervisor at Polytex and grew up in his family’s lighting business, which operated three showrooms in Greensboro and High Point for more than 50 years. Jason enjoys working with Elite Home Inspections because of the people, especially owner Brooke Michaels, and the better quality of life the job has given him with his wife, Michelle, and their 9-year-old daughter, Isabella. As a lead inspector, he takes pride in helping clients make informed decisions by providing thorough, honest, and reliable inspections.

For Randy Parrish, home inspection is about more than checking boxes. With a background as an Assistant Superintendent in construction, he brings a trained eye and a deep understanding of how homes are built, but what he enjoys most is helping people feel confident in one of the biggest decisions they’ll make. Outside of work, Randy is a family man who enjoys golfing with his boys, playing guitar, and cheering on his daughter and granddaughter at volleyball games. Most of all, he values the time he gets to spend with his wife and family.

Robin Smith is a home inspector who has spent her life working hard, from waiting tables and working as a cosmetologist to teaching physical education for 20 years and renovating homes with her brother. Her strong work ethic was instilled in her as a child, when she and her brother actually argued over who got to sweep the family’s tent, a story that still makes her laugh today. After retiring from teaching, Robin went back to school to become a home inspector and says she loves that every house brings something different, from seeing how homes are built to imagining the stories they hold. Outside of work, family is what matters most to Robin, and whether she’s traveling, playing pickleball, or simply spending time with the people she loves, she tries to make the most of every day, while still insisting she’s the best sweeper in the family.

The company added the service by bringing on someone who was already trained in sewer scoping. Commercial work is now a growing part of the schedule, and Brooke wants agents thinking of Elite for it the way they already do for single-family homes.

At home, she’s nearly an empty nester. Her oldest son is a double major at UNC Chapel Hill, her youngest just graduated high school, and her daughter is due with Brooke’s first granddaughter in about three and a half weeks. Pepper, a miniature schnauzer she calls “a thirteen-year-old senior citizen,” goes everywhere with her.

She’s clear about which kind of business owner she is. Steve Jobs had the ideas and Steve Wozniak was the implementer, she says, and she’s the implementer. Her friends often bring her ideas she’d never have come up with herself, and she’s perfectly happy being the one who brings them to life.

The next thing she wants has a deadline on it. She has a part-time inspector on the team, the first woman she’s hired for the role, and she wants the business to grow enough this year to make the position full-time.

Some buyers would rather have a woman walk them through the house, the same way some patients would rather see a woman doctor, and Brooke wants to offer that on any inspection somebody asks for.


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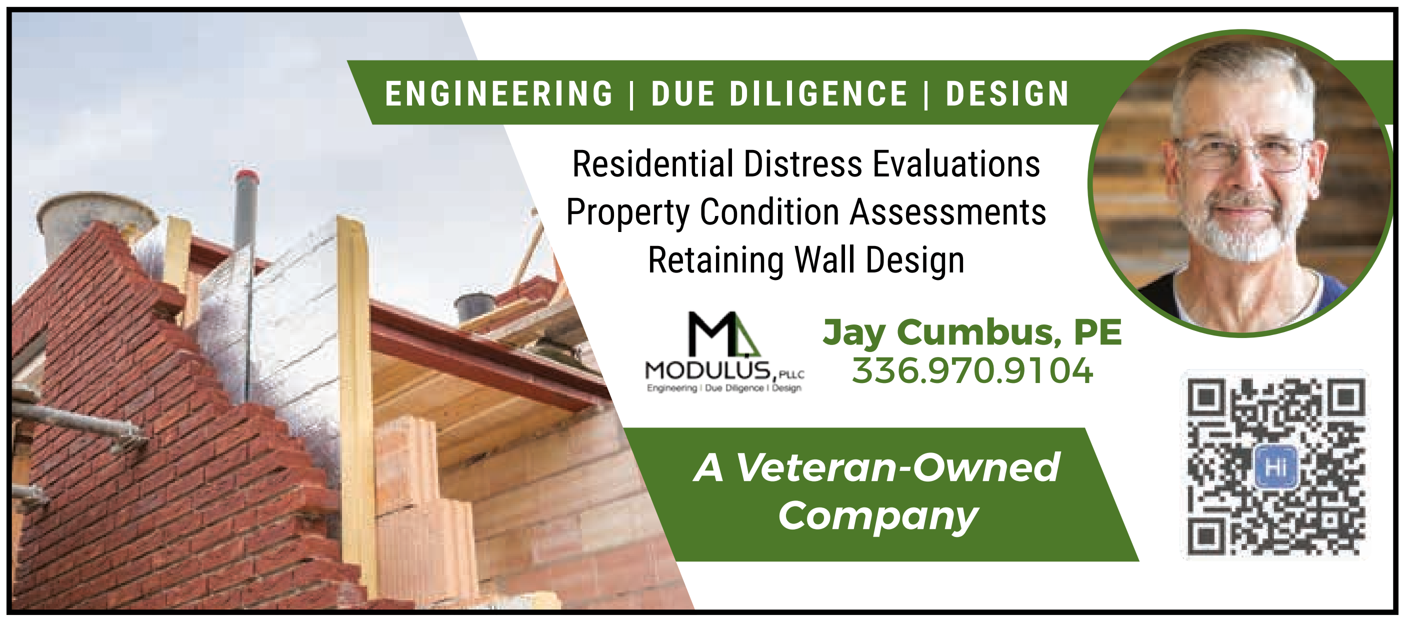
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Fall Is Here:

5 Things Real Estate Agents Should Focus on Right Now

BY CHRIS PAPPALARDO

September is here, summer vacations are wrapping up, kids are back in school, and we are officially entering the fall real estate market. This time of year can be a turning point for agents.

Some will mentally start winding down and tell themselves, "I'll get serious again in January." Successful agents recognize that the next few months are an opportunity to finish the year strong **and build momentum going into 2027.**

Here are five things to focus on right now.

1. Reconnect With Your Database

Your database remains one of your greatest business assets. September is a perfect time to reconnect with past clients, friends, prospects, and people you haven't spoken with recently.

Don't make every conversation about real estate.

Ask how their summer went, how their family is doing, and what they have planned for the fall. Be curious and genuinely interested. Relationships create conversations, conversations create opportunities, and opportunities create closings.

2. Get Serious About Your Pipeline

Pull out your database, CRM, notebook, spreadsheet—or wherever you keep the names of people who have told you they might move.

Who could realistically buy or sell before the end of the year?

Stop treating "maybe" like a lead. Have real conversations and determine motivation, timing, and next steps. Your goal should be to build a clear list of people you can actively help over the next 90–120 days.

3. Take Advantage of Less Competition

Here's the good news about fall: **some agents are already checking out.**

Football starts, holidays approach, schedules get busy, and suddenly prospecting becomes optional. That creates an opportunity for you.

Keep making calls. Keep following up. Keep holding open houses. Keep asking for referrals. Keep having real estate conversations. You don't have to work 80 hours a week—you just need to consistently do the activities that generate business.

4. Become the Market Expert

Buyers and sellers are hearing plenty of noise about interest rates, inventory, prices, and the economy. They don't need another salesperson repeating headlines. They need a professional who can explain **what is actually happening in their local market.**

Know your numbers. Understand inventory, days on market, price reductions, pending sales, and recent comparable sales.

Knowledge creates confidence, and confidence creates trust.

5. Start Building 2027 Now

January is not the time to start thinking about next year. **September is.**

The conversations you have today may become listings and buyers in October, November, January, or February. The prospecting, follow-up, relationships, and habits you build this fall will determine how you begin 2027.

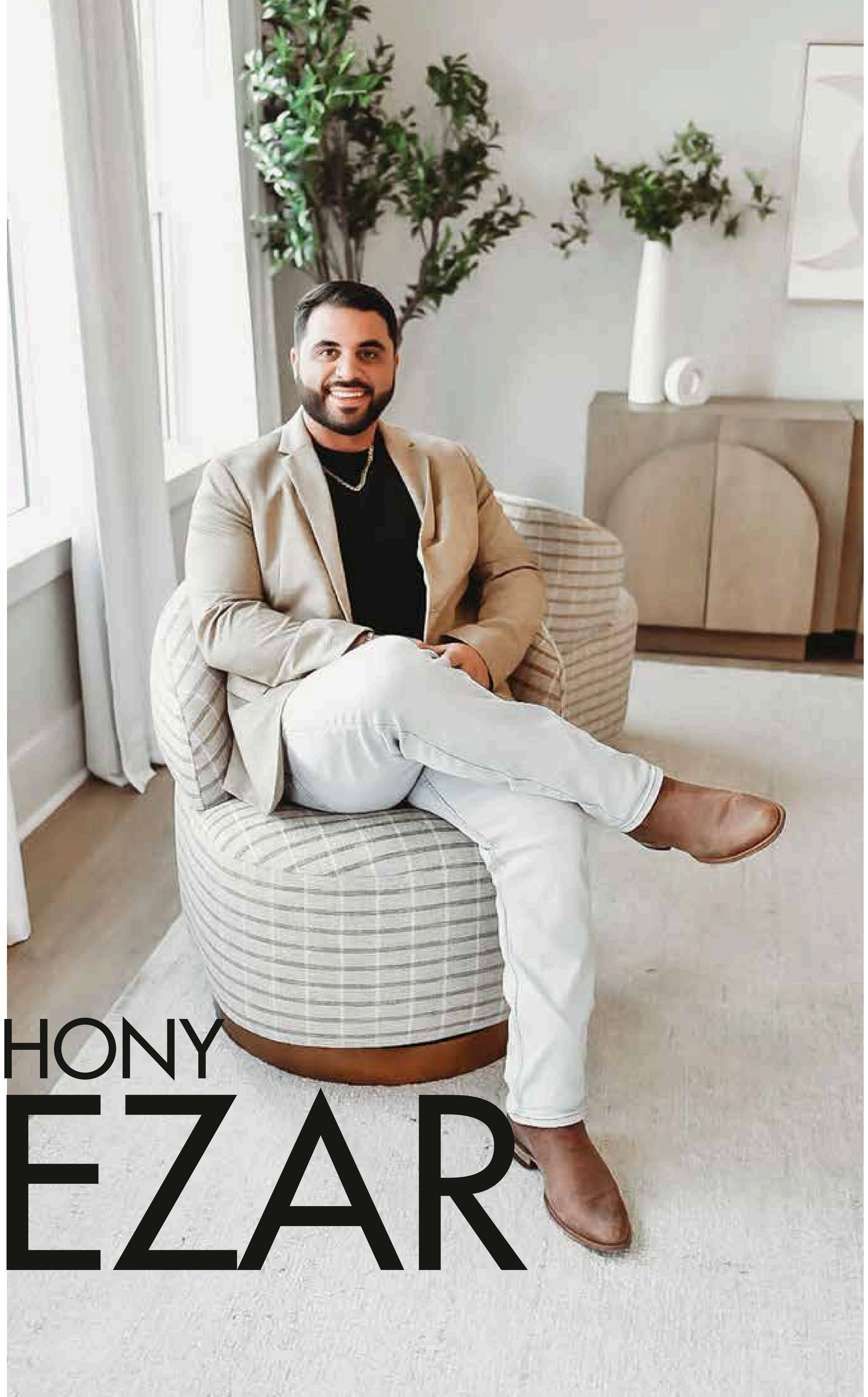
Don't wait for January 1st to create momentum.

Finish 2026 like you want to start 2027.

The agents who stay focused while others slow down will enter the new year with something far more valuable than another set of goals—they'll enter it with **momentum.**

As always if we can help you in any way call text or email me.

Chris@pappalardoteam.com, 336-525-1289



BY JASON WEBER
PHOTOS BY ALLEN HOUSE IMAGES

ANTHONY HEZAR

MORE THAN A DEVELOPMENT

There's a street in Alamance County called Memory Lane, and the subdivision it runs through is Harpland Estates. Anthony Hezar named both.

Harper is his daughter and Landon is his son, and he pushed the two names together and put the result on a sign at the entrance of a place he built from a farm.

He bought the farm, gave his sister the back acreage, put four homes up front and flipped the original farmhouse. The four houses weren't the point. The point was that her three kids and his two would grow up in the same yard, which had been the plan long before there was land to put it on.

"My sister's my best friend," he says. She's also his buyer's agent and his neighbor. "She is my rock. She's been there through every step of my story."

The four homes paid for the rest. "In order to make this land actually achievable in price, I need to sell off some of these other lots," he says.

He grew up thinking every kid worked in the family business. His dad is Middle Eastern, his mom is Italian, and when Anthony was small his dad ran an Italian restaurant in Mebane. His mom taught school and served tables at night while his dad worked open to close.

The two kids slept in the booths, and the best thing in the building, as far as they were concerned, was the carpet sweeper that made no noise. "We didn't know we were working; we were just having fun being together."

His dad moved into Subway franchises later, and the kids went too. Anthony was too short to reach the vegetables, so his father put him on the register instead.

"I used to pay people to drop me off at work," he says. "I'd pay them in sandwiches."

Baseball took him from Catawba to Elon for two years, then to East Carolina, where he graduated cum laude. He got his license while still enrolled and announced it to his parents at his sister's wedding. When he quit baseball, he put it down completely and didn't pick up another ball until Harper wanted to play softball and he began coaching.

His first client was a buyer named Jasmine Ramos, and the house they bought sits next to the church he attends now.

He was new enough to have a question about everything, and an experienced woman in real estate answered all of them. He makes time for newer agents now for the same reason.

"My face being on a sign in the yard isn't going to sell the house."

Early on he decided a million-dollar sale and ten hundred-thousand-dollar sales paid about the same, except one came with ten contracts and ten negotiations. He wanted the reps. He doesn't speak Spanish, so he borrowed an employee from his dad's Subway to translate while he learned the business ten deals at a time.

He originally got licensed because he wanted to renovate and flip houses, but the resale business took off anyway. When the pandemic emptied the shelves, he stopped waiting on inventory.

"Nobody had the inventory," he says. "So I said, screw it, we'll make the inventory."

The land came into his life through his mother. She was diagnosed with breast cancer, and while she was fighting it she fell and broke her back. Anthony lived half an hour away, which sounds like nothing until it's your mom, so he sold his house and moved into one of his own rentals in Elon.

"THIS IS ALL POSSIBLE THROUGH MY FAITH WALK. GOD AND FAMILY. THOSE ARE THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS."

She's in remission now, his sister lives next door, and the five cousins are, in his words, freaking best friends.

Seven years ago he started working with Roy, the owner of Foundation Home Builders. He draws his subdivisions on graph paper before anything reaches his engineer, and the two once spent six hours in a restaurant doing it with house plans.

His sister figured out what kind of company it was on a job site, when she pointed at a man sweeping a driveway and asked who he was. That was Roy, and sweeping is nowhere near his pay grade.

"I grew up in a neighborhood, not a subdivision."

On one recent subdivision he could have doubled the lot count and made more money. He kept the lots between a half acre and three quarters instead, because he knows who lives out there.

In Liberty he asked for no variances, though one would have fit more houses on the same dirt.

"That's not what they need," he says. "I'm trying to protect the integrity of what Liberty is and what it stands for."

He's watched Mebane grow fast enough that people talk about the old Mebane and the new one as two places. What he's protecting is what he had.

"I grew up in a neighborhood where we rode bikes, we played yard ball, we played kickball, we had water balloon fights, we sold lemonade," he says.

None of it happens without the business that pays for it, so he won't turn down a client, past client or referral. "Everything that allows the developments to happen is based on my resale business," he says.

His kids remain the organizing principle. There's a Harper house plan, a Landon house plan, a current project called Harp's Place on Landon Lane, and another named for his mother's maiden name, Pallini Place. Ask Anthony what makes any of it possible, though, and he doesn't hesitate.

"This is all possible through my faith walk," he says. He's made plenty of mistakes and is quick to say who deserves the credit. "God and family. Those are the two most important things."

The next several years look like more land and more neighborhoods where they're needed, whether that means one lot split into two or one tract turned into fifty.

There are projects he isn't ready to name yet, and given how he names things, somebody in his family already knows what they'll be called.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Another Chapter

BY JASON WEBER
PHOTOS BY BILL WELCH
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Crest Owner Adam Spear alongside Manager Austin Hayes

The first walk through the house required a certain way of seeing. Years of neglect sat on every surface, and most people who came through saw exactly that, which was an old building with an enormous amount of work ahead of it.

Adam Spear saw what was underneath.

“The bones of the house were incredible,” he says. “The craftsmanship, the scale, the architecture. It was obvious that someone had poured their heart into building it.”

The man who built it had been gone for generations, and the house had spent decades being altered by people who came after him. On that corner of South Cherry Street it stood as one of the last survivors of a street once lined with homes like it.

It was built between 1883 and 1885 for James Mitchell Rogers, and the grand houses that stood along Cherry Street and the avenues around it are mostly gone now. This one is still here.

Rogers arrived in Winston-Salem in 1880 and didn’t stay anonymous for long. He ran Brown, Rogers and Company, a hardware business he led as president for more than four decades, and when the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1885, he was its first president. The city that grew up around this house was in some measure a city he helped build.

“It was built by J. Mitchell Rogers, someone who played an important role in the early development of Winston-Salem,” Spear says. “That gave the restoration a much greater purpose. We weren’t just renovating a building. We were preserving a piece of our city’s story.”

“Once you understand that, you realize you’re only the caretaker for a small part of its history,” he says, “and it’s your responsibility to leave it better than you found it.”

Restoration on a house this old runs on discovery rather than schedule, and this one gave up something new almost every time a wall came down. Some of it was structural and unwelcome.

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Adam Spear, Owner of The Crest

Much of it wasn’t.

“Almost every wall we opened uncovered another surprise,” Spear says. Underneath decades of alterations, more of the original work had survived than anyone expected, waiting in the dark to be found again.

“It reminded us over and over that our job wasn’t to erase history,” he says. “It was to uncover it.”

Whenever something could be restored rather than replaced, they chose the harder path, preserving what was already there and producing a house that couldn’t be reproduced any other way.

The evidence is in the details most guests walk past without registering. There’s the original woodwork, the trim, the staircases, the architectural elements that were cut and fitted by hand close to 140 years ago.

“Those weren’t mass-produced,” Spear says. “Every piece represents countless hours of skilled craftsmanship. When you slow down and notice those details, you gain an appreciation for the people who built this home long before any of us were here.”

Not everything could stay as it was. People holding events in 2026 expect comfort, accessibility and convenience that an 1880s house was never designed to provide, and the work was fitting those things in without spending the character to get them.

There came a day, after months of scaffolding and construction and the ordinary uncertainty of a project this size, when the exterior was finished enough to step back and look at.

“We saw the home looking much like it would have over a century ago,” Spear says. “That was when it truly felt real. We weren’t just restoring a building. We were bringing back a landmark.”

Construction was finished. The house wasn't.

That changed the first time a bride walked down the aisle, and it has kept changing ever since. Families gather here now. People celebrate here, mourn here, and mark the days they'll want to remember in rooms that had sat empty for years before anyone thought to save them.

"Those moments transform an old building back into what it was always meant to be," Spear says, "a place where memories are made."

He wanted people walking through the front door to feel the warmth and character of a historic home rather than the neutrality of a banquet hall. More than anything, he wanted them to feel connected to the house, the people they came with, and everything that happened there before they arrived.

"Every generation has an opportunity to decide what pieces of history are worth preserving," he says. "I'm grateful we had the chance to save this one."

His hope for the city is bigger than the property. He thinks a place like this argues, quietly and by existing, that keeping what came before doesn't slow a city down. It gives the city its character and makes its identity sturdier as it grows.

Twenty years from now, the house will have outlasted this chapter too, and somebody else will be responsible for it.

"I hope people simply say, I'm glad they saved it."

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