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*Special Advertising Feature***What Makes You Stand Out?**

WE ASK SOME MEMBERS OF THE THOUSAND IF THEY HAVE A SPECIALTY, A SECRET, OR A TALENT OUTSIDE OF REAL ESTATE THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THEIR SUCCESS

By *Joseph Dobrian***LAUREN MUSS**

Douglas Elliman, New York



"I'm not the broker who will tell you what you want to hear to get the listing. I would rather be the second broker and the cleanup girl. Skiing and travel are a big part of my life and those trips have been a gateway to business relationships and sales. I'm an open book. I hide nothing. I'm very active physically and socially. I'm extremely organized with a type-A personality—I'm not sure I know how to relax! Everything I do, whether it's travel, skiing, dining, going to an exhibit, is somehow work-related because I rarely go anywhere without discussing real estate."

**NATHAN FITTS**

RE/MAX, Blue Ridge, Ga.



"I've been in the business since I was 18, right out of high school. It's all about relationships: I've

sold eight or 10 houses to some people; I also represent 22 builders, and might sell them land to build on. I stress to my agents the importance of building close relationships. I've always enjoyed picking out design features and materials for new homes. I have hobbies that feed into real estate, and a TV show to build recognition. I'm not the best at paperwork, but I'm the relationship guy. I can listen to what you want, and find exactly that."

**LANE HARRIS**

Harris Real Estate Group, El Paso, Texas



"Positive thoughts encourage positive actions, which often yield positive results."

**KYLE W. BLACKMON**

Compass, New York



"My dad was a successful real-estate agent in North Carolina for 25 years, and he taught me the importance of

maintaining my focus and treating every client and agent with integrity and honesty, regardless of price point. My mom founded a successful home and farm advisory-service business. She reinforced the importance of putting your client first; discretion; focused research."

**LIBBY SOSINSKI-SOULLIARD**

Keller Williams Realty, Pittsburgh



"I specialize in REO [“real-estate owned” or foreclosed properties]. I just like doing it; I was drawn to it. It's a niche where if I wear a nice suit I look ridiculous, because the houses are often in distressed condition. REO involves title issues, maintaining the property for the seller, and being extremely organized to deal with the high volume. There are safety issues; occupancy inspections take longer; it's task-oriented. Lots of the banks are rehabbing these properties now, to recoup more. If you're willing to do more work for less money, go to REO."

**DARREN SUKENIK**

Douglas Elliman Real Estate, New York

"When I went into real estate, I didn't think it would be a career choice. I was an interior designer and a designer of contemporary

women's wear for many years, and I bring that design acumen into my business. I know how something will look before it's built. If my buyers are buying something that needs work, I can tell them what they'll need to do and what it will look like."

**BLAIR MYERS**

Better Homes &amp; Gardens Real Estate, Warner Robins, Ga.

"I've sold many homes to people I've met through my involvement in fitness. I'm an expert chef and baker, and I post many of my creations on social media on those subjects. Although I wouldn't say the latter two have a direct impact on my sales, I have made several direct sales



from connections within the fitness realm. I'm a huge believer in branding my name: I promote Team Blair; I give away Blair dolls to anyone who requests them. My team drives [cars] with the logo and pictures of me on the top and sides. Often I get calls

from new clients just because I'm so well known as a top seller, and my name is out there in so many venues, but sometimes I'll have someone ask me to list their home simply because 'I see your cars everywhere!'"

**"I STRESS TO MY AGENTS THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS."**

**JIM ALLEN**

Coldwell Banker Howard Perry and Walston Realty, Raleigh, N.C.



"I've become the rainmaker in my business. I'm 57, but I've got two boys, nine and 11, and they're more of a priority now. I figure they're not going to miss their baseball games, but I might, so I'm coaching a team this year. Coaching gives me those joy-breaks, especially when I've broken through to a kid who's in bad spirits, maybe because of family issues. If I can help him, that's a lot more rewarding than selling houses."

*Joseph Dobrian is a freelance writer specializing in real estate.*