

REAL ESTATE

Compass adds concierge to real estate service for celebrity clientele

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Bridgehampton, NY home

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Technology-driven real estate platform Compass is augmenting its appeal to a niche segment with a sports and entertainment division.

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Compass Global Sports & Entertainment division will cater specifically to the needs of professional athletes, musicians and other such figures. As Compass continues to grow, carving out an identifiable niche will lend the brand cache in a crowded field.

"Owning a professional basketball team and working closely with the players gave me unique insights into their career-driven lifestyles," Compass' Mr. Allon said. "They may wake up one day in one city, only to learn they need to quickly move to another city with their entire family.

"A well-informed agent who really understands their situation can be a huge time and energy saver for them so they can focus on being their best."

Sports and entertainment

The extension is a natural one for Compass. Its co-founder and executive chairman, Ori Allon, is the co-owner of Israel's Hapoel Jerusalem basketball team alongside NBA all-star Amar'e Stoudemire.

Mr. Allon's connections to sports have already led to pro-athlete clientele, including golf legend Greg Norman. Establishing credibility with a high-value consumer sub-segment can help Compass, only two years old, continue making a name for itself and separate the brand from more established players in the industry.



Compass listing for Greg Norman's ranch, Colorado

Compass describes its approach for the division as "custom high-tech and high-touch." Agent Kofi Nartey, who has worked with basketball players Candace Parker, Derek Fisher, Kevin Durant and Michael Jordan, as well as singers including Iggy Azalea, is heading the creation of a network of offices and agents designed specifically for this clientele.

The intense training regimens of athletes and privacy of all entertainers are among the concerns that the Global Sports & Entertainment Division aims to address. In addition, the traveling and occasional necessity of relocation also mark these professionals' real estate needs as different from others'.

Accordingly, Compass will assist in finding interior designers, architects, moving companies and personal chefs and private car services, addressing the issues that the busy schedules of these celebrity clients often do not permit.



East Hampton, NY home

"Compass Global Sports & Entertainment Division will serve a very important niche market that is equal parts real estate and concierge services," said Robert Reffkin, Compass founder/CEO, in a statement.

"Sports stars and entertainers often find themselves having to shift life and career plans in a moment's notice, and with Kofi's expertise, Compass is prepared to seamlessly guide them through any stage in their journeys whether in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Boston, Washington or beyond," he said.

Niche appeal

Other real estate brokerages are also extending their brands to reach particular niche audiences.

For example, Realogics Sotheby's International Realty (RSIR), the brokerage's largest Pacific affiliate in the Pacific Northwest, is launching a publication geared toward the region's influx of Chinese individuals.

The all-Mandarin "Seattle Luxury Living," released in partnership with Tiger Oak Publications, will target the affluent Chinese who have immigrated to or are visiting the Seattle metropolitan area, particularly Bellevue, WA, as the area is currently undergoing an immigration wave. Speaking to consumers in their own language is a necessary step in forming strong relationships and converting sales ([see story](#)).

Additionally, "high-tech, high-touch" approaches are being used more generally to help all clients find more specific homes attuned to their wants and needs.

Real estate brokerage firm Houlihan Lawrence is capitalizing on digital tools to help its clients move "North of NYC."

The Christie's International Real Estate affiliate and digital agency King & Partners have designed the North of NYC

Web site that organizes properties according to lifestyle personas, offering curated recommendations alongside each. The method more directly services consumers on an individual level, helping to forge the strong bonds that help sell properties ([see story](#)).

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