

REAL ESTATE

## Networking, honesty are cornerstones for successful luxury realtors

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*Real estate is about relationship building and storytelling. Image credit: Brown Harris Stevens*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Luxury thrives on nurtured relationships, and high-end real estate is no exception.

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During a [Luxury Hour webinar on May 18](#), top real estate agents and brokers shared their secrets to success. While the speakers had a range of experiences, building strong relationships with both clients and peers was a common thread.

"What success is for me is being respected by your peers and seeing that what you're doing and your accomplishments are respected by others," said Billy Nash, founder of [Nash Luxury at Illustrated Properties](#), Palm Beach Gardens, FL.

"I think becoming an authority in a specific area whether you're selling ranches or luxury real estate or whatever it is becoming that authority in that specific industry is also a sign of success," he said. "Brand recognition for me is a fulfillment of success."

Luxury Hour was moderated by Mickey Alam Khan, president of [Luxury Portfolio International](#), New York.

### Relationship building

An agent relies on leads, and for many of the most accomplished agents, referrals are the best way to source leads.

As Louise Phillips Forbes, licensed associate real estate broker at New York's [Brown Harris Stevens Residential Sales](#), explained, referrals can come from former clients as well as peers.

Other panelists reiterated the latter.

"The amount of business I get from other agents is extraordinary," said Gary Gold, executive vice president at [Hilton & Hyland](#), Beverly Hills. "And the amount of business they give to other agents is extraordinary."



*Referrals from clients and agents is the main source of leads for top agents. Image credit: Hilton & Hyland*

While word of mouth and brand recognition is essential for agents working on their Rolodexes, other forms of marketing should not be overlooked.

"I work in the specific neighborhood where I live, which has the highest average sale price in our region," said Bobby Stephens, senior sales vice president at [Comey & Shepherd Realtors](#), Cincinnati, Ohio.

"I do advertising in the local neighborhood periodicals; every neighborhood in our area has magazine periodicals," he said. "Schools are highly useful tools here to get sellers because parents are at sporting events or school activities.

"So, I do a lot of local marketing in those areas to get new business."

Luxury real estate agents may also need a different approach with their most wealthy and powerful clients.

"Get involved in a lifestyle of luxury, because that's really what you're selling," Mr. Nash said.

"These things all I think go hand in glove with the process of selling real estate," he said. "Having these experiences around luxury, understanding luxury products, cars, wine, art it all comes together when you're in this marketplace."



*Standing out as an agent can be as simple as being honest and a good listener. Image credit: Comey & Shepherd Realtors*

Strong work ethic, accessibility, honesty and listening skills are also necessary to better understand luxury clients, especially with high-stakes real estate transactions on the line.

While real estate experiences highs and lows, resilience and hustle will extend an agent's career longevity and help them navigate the market challenges.

"You got to leverage your wins," Mr. Gold said. "You move to the next one and then that's how you move forward."

Promoting listings

Receiving a referral and listing is only half the battle for agents, who also need to promote their listings.

Ms. Forbes encourages agents to use social media, even if they do not build a large following, because the content can easily be shared with other prospective clients.

As real estate brokers embrace more digital tools to share listings and build client relationships, savvy agents are finding success on TikTok in unexpected ways. Since TikTok is a platform that revolves heavily around trends, real estate agents using it should be aware of popular content to incorporate those themes into their own content ([see](#)

story).

Visuals are another area worth investing in.

Real estate agents and brokers only have one chance to make a first impression, so quality photography and professional staging are essential investments for successfully marketing prestige properties. The most effective stagings have curated looks that hint at lifestyles while complementing the architectural style and features of a property ([see story](#)).

"I put such a ridiculous amount into getting the photography right because if that's not right, often the person might just pass your house and not see it," Mr. Gold said. "I spend a lot of hours on the order I do it in and the story I tell and then the adjustments I make."

Ultimately, however, being successful in real estate comes back to relationships.

"Generosity pays off," Ms. Forbes said.

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