

greater sarasota/manatee edition

BROKER★AGENT™

magazine



*Michael and
Sandy Albano*

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THE DISTINGUISHED DIFFERENCE, EXPERIENCE IT



When it comes to real estate professionals, there's no denying that success lies in a variety of factors. Salesmanship, customer service and business smarts are key, as is the ability to work as a team player. Michael Albano's thriving real estate career is the result of his ability to seamlessly blend these components with a genuine desire to meet his clients' needs: he is as amiable as he is accomplished.

The Right Start

Growing up in upstate New York, says Michael, he learned early on the value of hard work. After attending college he pursued his love of hockey, accepting a position with the Eastern Hockey League's Thunderbirds in Winston-Salem, N.C. He then embarked upon a career in sales, first returning to his hometown to help his father develop the local paging company that the elder Albano had founded. The move proved to be a lucrative one: the father-son team succeeded in growing the firm into a nationwide presence, and Mobile Communications Corporation of America was eventually acquired by BellSouth in the mid-1980s. Michael and his father took another local company into the national business sector, selling that firm in the later 1980s.

While there was room for continued success as an entrepreneur, Michael and his wife, Sandy, made the life-changing decision to relocate to Sarasota. Like many transplants, he had become familiar with the area through his family's vacation home, and Michael and his wife welcomed the opportunity to enjoy the amazing weather and lifestyle that the region offered. "We really wanted a change of pace," he recalls, "and we made the right choice in coming here."

Smooth Transitions

He had initially planned to continue his business renovation ventures with his father, but instead Michael's move led him into the world of corporate technology sales. His experience and natural business skills enabled him to rise through the ranks of national organizations, where he moved from working as a local sales representative into higher-level positions, ultimately working as a national accounts manager.

Though he'd often been told that he would be a great fit as a real estate agent, Michael acknowledges that it wasn't until corporate restructuring occurred within his company that he seriously considered pursuing his sales license. But as 2005 drew to a close, he made the move. At the time, Sandy was working in the office of a local boutique agency, and she recognized that his customer-friendly approach would work well in the service-oriented world of real estate.

While his exceptional customer service skills, business start-up experience and sales abilities were great assets early on in his real estate career, Michael also drew on his own experiences as a buyer and seller. "I had always enjoyed being a part of the process," he recalls, "and we had been successful in our transactions." Tapping into his background as a real estate consumer enabled him to serve as a better real estate professional for his clients; he understands the challenges, stresses and questions that buyers and sellers have, and he readily answers their questions and concerns in order to facilitate a transaction that is as smooth and stress-free as possible.

The Premier Experience

Though he launched his real estate career at the boutique firm where his wife once worked, Michael says that the move to Premier Properties of Southwest Florida was the right one. "I felt that it was time to make a change, and this has been a fantastic company to work for," he asserts. Working with Premier Properties, he adds, has helped to take his business to the next level. "I'm collaborating with great people, top-notch real estate professionals who have years of experience in our industry." A collegial atmosphere makes all the difference. "My fellow agents are willing to offer their assistance, to engage in an exchange of ideas, and to do what it takes to best serve the greater good of our clients." And in today's transitioning market, there's no greater assurance to clients as well as real estate professionals, that their company is stable and poised for continued success. "We're going strong," says Michael. "We've got a great

Classic Elegance

presence established in Naples, and we're continuing to build name recognition here in Sarasota thanks to our outstanding advertising and branding. It's an exciting time to be with the firm."

Steve Bailey, vice president of Premier Properties and acting broker for the office, returns the compliment. "We are proud to have Michael Albano affiliated with our company," he states. "He is a first-rate person with high standards, and that translates into business success. Mike is highly respected by his peers, and his clients appreciate his work ethic and focus on producing results."

Those results are heralded by an award-winning businessman and entrepreneur, Gard Mayer, who utilized Michael's services in the sale of his home. "Mike sold our house in an extremely difficult market," he offers. "His thorough research and ability to communicate effectively enabled us to price our property accordingly. He was very accommodating in the marketing of our home, and held open houses accordingly until we closed." Mayer continues, "I've recommended Mike's services to many of my friends in the area, and I know that they have all enjoyed similar experiences."

Professionalism and Personality

Simply put, Michael is as affable as he is intelligent; confident and approachable, he creates easy connections with clients and fellow agents alike. He works with a varied clientele that includes local homeowners as well as individuals throughout the United States and abroad who seek to acquire and sell their vacation or investment properties. Tailoring his services to meet each client's unique needs, he has earned a reputation as a trustworthy and resourceful advocate. Referring to his attentive and highly professional approach, client Lisa Lewis states, "We were very pleased with Mike's work for us! He is extremely knowledgeable on the current housing market. He listened to our needs and was always available to us. Mike was attentive to every detail and an effective negotiator. We will call on him the next time we need a real estate professional!"

"I really enjoy working with buyers," explains Michael. "I like the process of searching for the right piece of property to meet an individual's lifestyle or criteria, from primary homes to vacation spots to investment properties. This is something that will become a part of my clients' lives, and I take my responsibilities to heart." While the transitioning market poses an often-overwhelming number of possibilities for buyers, Michael remains grounded in his approach that the clients' needs come first. "There are a lot of choices available right now, and I enjoy the process of narrowing those options down in order to find the right home for the right person," he explains. "It's challenging, but I have never shied away from a challenge."

Keeping abreast of the market's diverse offerings means that Michael spends ample time in the field. Not only does he attend broker



previews and MLS meetings in order to stay current on listings, but he also maintains strong collegial relationships with his fellow real estate professionals. "Other agents aren't my competition; they're my resources," he observes. "By working together, we can better accomplish the needs of our clients." His knowledge of local listings enables Michael to help clients pinpoint the properties that will best suit them, and to reduce lost time in the field.

As a listing specialist, Michael taps into the exceptional marketing that Premier Properties provides to its clientele. Properties are promoted through targeted marketing campaigns that include nationwide print advertising, as well as a heavy online presence. The firm has also developed professional relationships with brokerages throughout the country and abroad, which enables out-of-town residents to easily access listings.

A golfer himself, Michael currently farms the Lakewood Ranch Country Club area and other regional golf communities. "I love these neighborhoods for the activities and amenities they offer to local families," he states. In order to meet the diverse wants and needs of his clientele, he has also become well versed in the waterfront homes market, expanding his presence into Longboat and Siesta Keys.

His work with local residents has garnered Michael a strong base of repeat and referral clients, who appreciate his knowledge of the region's amenities and communities. He has also generated a steady stream of international clientele, who rely on his exceptional communications skills to keep them abreast of developments in a timely and consistent manner. In fact, early on in his career Michael earned the e-Pro designation, which allows him to maximize his online presence. "From creating a client base to offering a comprehensive marketing campaign that reaches a specific target audience, I'm using the Internet not only to benefit my own business, but to enhance my clients' experiences as well," he explains. "More and more people are initiating their real estate searches online, and I'm able to reach those individuals, as well as assist my clients as they navigate the World Wide Web." And as the online market evolves, so does Michael. Staying on top of technology, he laughs, "is in my blood."

Michael J. Albano

Another inherent trait is Michael's competitive nature, which has consistently driven him to succeed. "I've been playing sports since I was a boy," he reveals. "I'm a team player, and if someone asks me for something, from fellow agents to my clients, I don't hesitate to give it my all." His winning attitude, he acknowledges, has helped him throughout his professional career. "In sports you learn that there's just no quitting," Michael explains. "I don't like to lose; I take pride in my team, and I want to see us succeed. That has been a driving factor for me in all parts of my life."

Motivation comes in many forms, and Michael's family provides endless inspiration for success. Sandy has joined his business, managing the administrative end so that he can focus his efforts on developing and maintaining client relationships. "I wouldn't be where I am without her," he offers. "She has been wonderful in helping to develop my personal brand, creating marketing pieces for my listings, and taking care of the myriad of duties that allow me to stay in the field, where my clients need me."

Michael and Sandy are the proud parents to three children. 13-year-old Samantha, 10-year-old Taylor and Jason, 3, "are a blessing. If they don't keep me going, nothing does," says Michael. "I want to instill in them the same foundation that I had." Like their father, the three are active in team sports. Together, the family enjoys the Sarasota lifestyle that includes outdoor activities and the arts.

From start-up entrepreneur to affiliating himself with Fortune-500 companies, Michael Albano has made a career in the sales industry thanks to his exceptional customer care. "Working with trust and honesty have been trademarks of my service from day one," he states. "I'm excited to continue this level of service in my real estate business, and look forward to the developments to come." Results-oriented and able to meet the needs of clients at every level, he consistently focuses on one outcome: "I want people to be satisfied," Michael says. "Meeting their needs is always my primary focus." ★

Michael J. Albano

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