

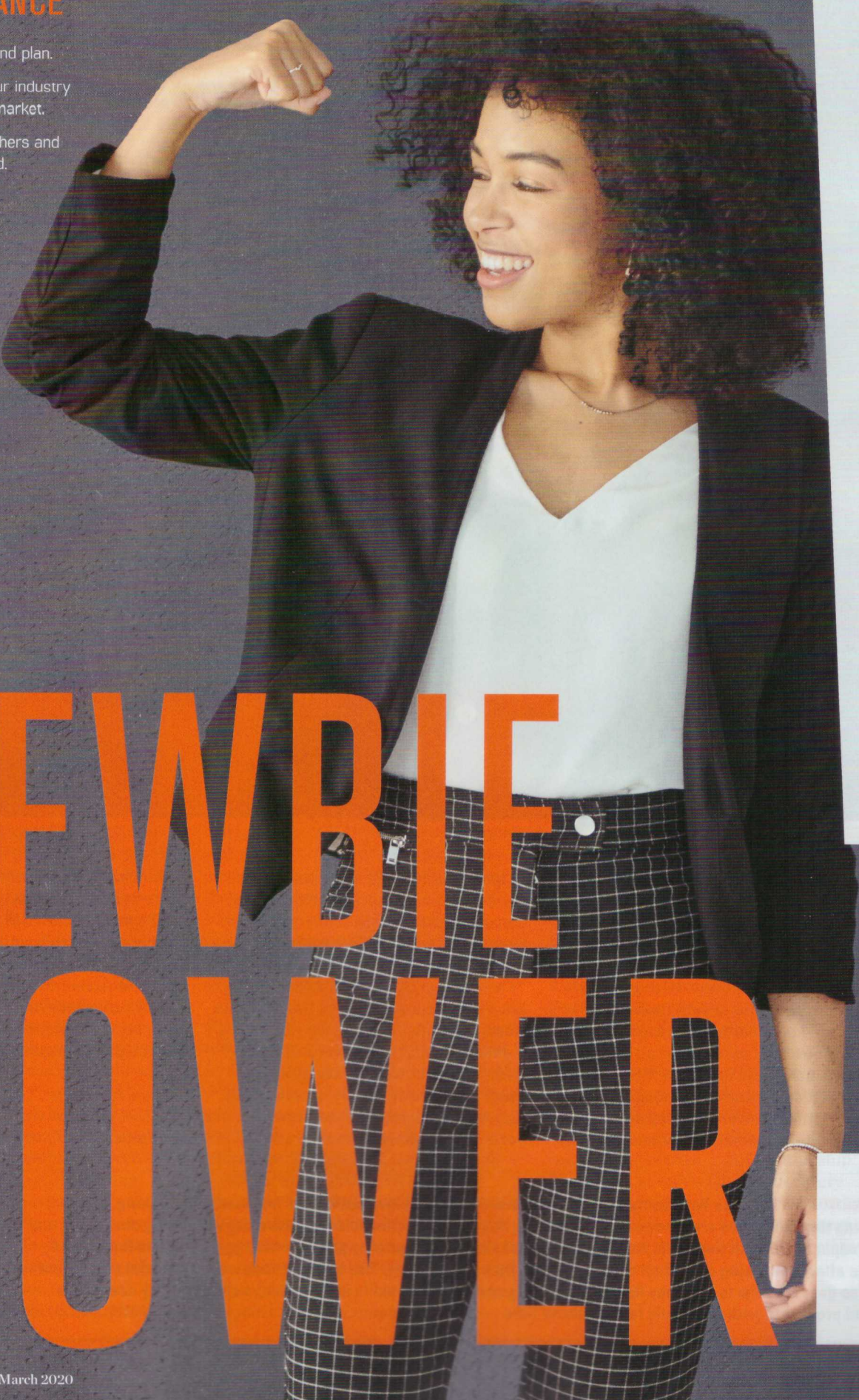
FROM THE EXPERTS

AT A GLANCE

Get organized and plan.

Learn about your industry
and your local market.

Connect with others and
spread the word.



NEWBIE POWER

30 THINGS TO DO YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS IN REAL ESTATE

Kickstart your new career with advice from the experts.

BY LISA A. BEACH

When Tansy Moon transitioned out of the mortgage business into a real estate career, she was already familiar with the industry and the Atlantic Beach area. To distinguish herself, she created a branded approach—inspired by her two young daughters. Every time Moon held an open house or a listing, she'd snap photos or videos of her kids jumping in front of the sign in the yard. Using the hashtag #supercute, she'd share these images on social media.

Her broker, Christy Budnick, recalls this anecdote to illustrate how an agent can achieve quick success in the business.

"Tansy sold over \$10 million her first year using this memorable approach," says Budnick, president and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty in Jacksonville. "And she was the queen of follow-up! Her clients were always talking about how Tansy touches base with them."

While there's no "one right way" to achieve success as a new agent, you can hit the ground running. Florida Realtor spoke with four top Florida brokers and other experts who shared their best tips on how you can crush it in your first 30 days.

SET A SOLID FOUNDATION

- Remember what you learned in real estate school about having 6–12 months of cash reserves? Take this seriously. —*Benchick*
- Buy and use a customer relationship management (CRM) program. Also, make sure it has a mobile version. It's the key to efficiently building your database and managing your marketing and advertising campaigns. —*Benchick*
- Work with your broker or manager to identify your goals in terms of income and lifestyle. Find your "why." From here, build your business plan. Identify the actions

that will help you meet or exceed your goals. —*Kendall*

4. Get all the tools you need to succeed, such as a laptop or tablet, smartphone, professional car, business cards and other marketing materials. —*Matias*

5. Establish a professional image by writing a bio and getting quality headshots taken. Use these to create full profiles on LinkedIn and other social media platforms, and on real estate sites like Realtor.com and Zillow. —*Matias*

6. Decide how you want to structure your business. Work with a local attorney to form an entity such as a PA (professional association) or PLLC (professional limited liability corporation), then send your application to the Florida Real Estate Commission (FREC) to move your license to that entity. —*Koontz*

7. Once you establish your entity, obtain a Tax ID Number and open a bank account and credit or debit account for the PA or PLLC. —*Koontz*

SPREAD THE WORD

8. Build your database. Enter at least 100 contacts into it your first 30 days. Include everyone that knows, loves and trusts you who can help influence and mold your career. Then find ways to stay in touch. —*Budnick*

9. Create a Mailchimp or iContact newsletter account (it's free) and add all the names and emails from your new database so you can send them a monthly informational newsletter. —*Buildingbetteragents.com*

10. Build a farm of about 200 to 300 residences. Your neighborhood may be a good place to start. Use a program such as Remine to gather names and addresses and add

them to your database. —*Saperstein*

11. Plan to give away at least two business cards every day. Put yourself in situations where you'll meet new people, whether it's at PTA meetings, Rotary breakfasts or the grocery store. Get out of your comfort zone to have relevant real estate conversations. —*Budnick*

12. Build a buyers' list. Volunteer to be a model sitter at a new-home sales center. Use a buyer interview sheet to ask questions about what buyers are looking for. Or get listings from a new construction site. The prospects might have to sell their old home (offer to list it for them) before they buy the new one. —*Matias*

THE EXPERTS



CYNTHIA BENCHICK
Principal broker/vice president, Charles Rutenberg Realty, Fort Lauderdale



CHRISTY BUDNICK
President and CEO/broker, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Florida Network Realty, Jacksonville



LARRY KENDALL
Founder, Ninja Selling



JO ANN KOONTZ
Attorney and CPA, Koontz & Associates, Sarasota



STAS MATIAS
Broker/co-owner, Erin Catron & Company Real Estate, Punta Gorda



PAUL SAPERSTEIN
Broker-associate, eXp Realty, Delray Beach

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WAYS TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Show your community that you care by giving back or getting involved. Here are some ways:

1. Support a personal cause you're passionate about, such as working with pet rescues or running a 5K to raise funds for breast cancer research.
2. Support an organization that ties more closely to housing-related issues, such as volunteering at a homeless shelter or building a home with Habitat for Humanity.
3. Conduct a drive (such as a toy drive at Christmas or back-to-school supply drive) to bring people to your office with donations. Besides the
- feel-good benefits of giving back, you're also meeting people in the community, which gives you the opportunity to spread the word about your new career and expand your network.
4. Attend local school board meetings. You'll learn about the school system and local education issues, while getting face-to-face with parents, who could become clients.
5. Attend local planning and zoning meetings where you can get up-to-date information about land issues and connect with local builders and developers.

NOW YOU KNOW

Check out the National Association of Realtors® Rookie Tool Kit (bit.ly/rookietoolkit), which gives you checklists and to-dos for your first year in real estate.

GET A FAST START WITH THESE MEMBER SERVICES

Florida Realtors offers a bevy of free services that new members can use to learn about the industry and local markets, get legal and tech help and watch how-to videos.

Here's a sample:

- **Florida Realtors Legal Hotline:** Attorneys on call to educate you on a broad range of real estate legal issues.

- **Florida Realtors Tech Helpline:** Tech support from trained experts is available every day of the week.
 - **Florida Realtors Graduate Realtor Institute (GRI):** Gain in-depth market knowledge, increase proficiency and enhance business success by earning this designation.
 - **Florida Realtors Take 5 Video Series:** A video library packed with hundreds of 5-minute how-to videos filled with ideas and coaching from successful Realtors.
- Got to floridarealtors.org to learn more.



13. Rather than send out notes to your sphere talking about your new career in real estate, talk about what you're currently working on and the latest market update. Take the emphasis off of your inexperience and talk about what you do know instead. —*Saperstein*

KNOW YOUR LOCAL MARKET

14. Attend homeowner association meetings and wear your badge to become known as the neighborhood Realtor. Be prepared with additional business cards, comparative market analysis (CMA) flyers and county market information. —*Benchick*

15. Educate yourself on the market you plan to serve. If you're selling condos or new-construction communities, build a relationship with the sales teams at these locations. For resales, visit as many open houses as possible. Schedule visits to some vacant listings to get a better feel of the area, construction and amenities these properties offer. —*Matias*

16. Ask agents in your office if you can help host an open house on their listings. This gives you the opportunity to learn about the market and get face-to-face interaction with potential buyers right away. —*Matias*

17. Many people start out with their sights set on million-dollar home sales, but one of the best ways to get to know your local market is by starting out in rentals. Whether you work with a landlord to find new tenants or work with prospective tenants to find a perfect apartment, you'll earn money, gain experience, learn the area and get to know people who may soon turn into buyers. —*Saperstein*

18. Pick a new neighborhood and drive by homes for sale in the MLS. This will help you get to know different areas of town. —*Buildingbetteragents.com*

19. Call five people from your database each day. Invite them to coffee and reconnect. Offer to give them a market update. Use the call to update your database with missing information. —*Matias*

CONNECT WITH OTHER PROS

20. Board participation provides the best agent-to-agent networking!

WATCH, LISTEN AND LEARN!

- **Your First 30 Days as a New Real Estate Agent**
Kevin Ward: bit.ly/yourfirst30daysKW
- **Tips and Advice Every New Agent Needs to Know**
Tom Ferry: bit.ly/newagentadvice
- **Your First 30 Days as a Real Estate Agent**
Bryan Casella: bit.ly/yourfirst30daysBC
- **10 Tips to Crush It in Real Estate—New Agents Must Watch:**
bit.ly/10tipstocrush
- **10 Things New Agents Should Do In Their First Month**
Stas Matias: floridarealtors.org/FirstMonth



Work together with leadership, committees, charitable foundations and community outreach projects. —*Benchick*

21. Develop relationships with at least two vendors, such as lenders and title companies. They've got free custom-branded marketing materials that can help you market your business and properties. —*Matias*

22. Support your community. Participate in Chamber of Commerce events and attend ribbon-cutting ceremonies for small businesses. —*Matias*

23. Find a mentor in your local office. Then, shadow that agent on listing appointments and buyer showings. This person can be a great resource. —*Budnick*

TAKE YOUR EDUCATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL

24. Plan to attend the annual Florida Realtors Convention & Trade Expo. You'll find some of the best education,

technology and governance information under one roof. —*Benchick*

25. Studying your trade doesn't end with earning your license. To thrive, read articles and preview property hot sheets daily. Become the local expert. —*Budnick*

26. Learn all about the Graduate Realtor® Institute (GRI) program. This designation is a powerful knowledge tool to attract and build new business. It can pay for itself in no time. —*Matias*

27. Take a class that helps you understand real estate contracts. This is vital so you don't create a legal issue unknowingly. Buyers and sellers want to know they made the right choice in working with you. Being able to answer their questions about the contract puts them at ease. Also, use the free Florida Realtors Legal Hotline if you have any contract questions. —*Matias*

28. Boost your marketing skills. Learn how to use all the free tools out there

(such as Canva and Photofy) to create free fliers, videos and photos. —*Matias*

29. Learn from the pros. Tap into the wisdom of successful people (in real estate and other industries) by listening to podcasts, reading articles, gleaning tips in online forums and watching videos. Whether it's Darren Hardy or Tom Ferry, plenty of pros share their insights that spark ideas for success. —*Matias*

30. One of the best ways to market yourself is by developing a specialty or niche. Check out certifications and designations, many of which only take a few hours to earn, then become an expert in working with seniors or helping military families relocate, for example. This type of specialization improves your marketing message and helps you build a reputation quickly. —*Saperstein*

With these tips in hand, you're ready to kickstart your new real estate career. #

Lisa Beach is an Orlando-based freelance writer.



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