

What 'being the best' means to 5 agents

Luxury homes and affluent clients require service that is second to none. If you've asked yourself how you can rise to the challenge of being the best luxury agent in the business, you're not alone. It's a question many ask—and one that only a handful can answer.

John Messina, Real Estate Associate Broker with Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty on Long Island, is quick to remind peers that being the best is about beating your own records—not necessarily everyone else's. "It's nice to be recognized for having the highest sales volume or most expensive sale in a particular year, but for me, the most important thing is representing your clients with the highest level of service, and always putting their interests above your own."

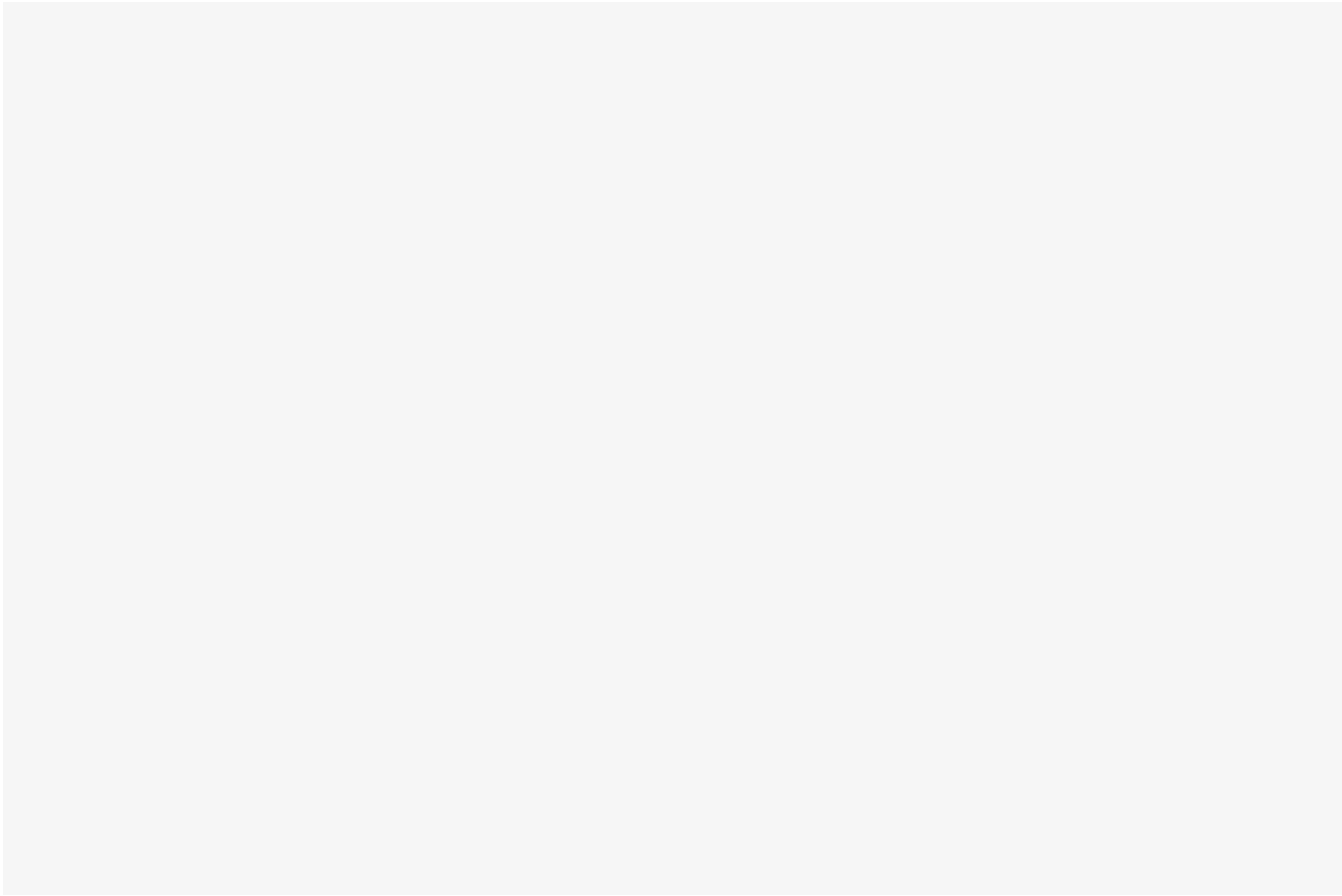
Karen Burton, Real Estate Professional with Sotheby's International Realty – Falmouth Brokerage in Cape Cod, lists a few criteria that the best agents have in common. "You bring clients a solution before they ask, and when they think about real estate, you immediately come to mind," she says. "You continue to set your own personal bar higher, you earn the respect of your peers, and you're humble."

Along with Messina and Burton, a total of five leading agents weighed in on what it means to be the best in the field. Linda MacDonald is Senior Vice President at Legacy Properties Sotheby's International Realty in Portland, Maine; Daniel Gonzalez is a REALTOR® at Island Sotheby's International Realty in Hawaii; and Marty Warren is a Broker with Zeitlin Sotheby's International Realty in Franklin, Tennessee. Here are their perspectives on being—and becoming—a top-performing agent.

What does "being the best" mean to you?

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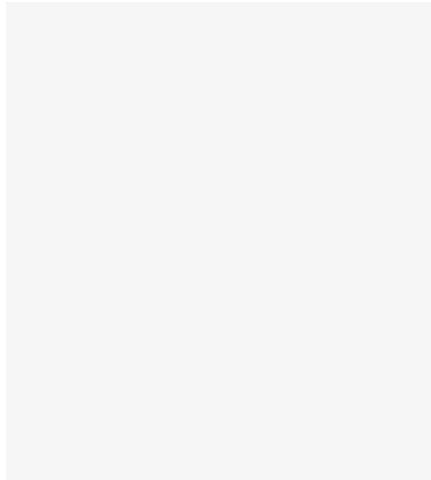


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Linda MacDonald

MacDonald: It means having the highest level of expertise, ethics, and experience. I believe the more you specialize in a geographic area and market segment, the greater your expertise becomes and the more likely it is that you will actually be the best.

Warren: Being the best simply has two main points. The first is that you're well respected by your clients and fellow agents and that your reputation is stellar. The second, which is equally important, is that at the end of the day you know that you've provided the best service possible to each and every client.

Gonzalez: You can win more listings than the competition, close more transactions, have the highest sales, and know more about the market than all of your peers—but ultimately, how you make your clients feel, and their complete satisfaction with your work, is how you can strive to be best-in-class in a highly competitive market.

What are the characteristics of a great real estate agent?

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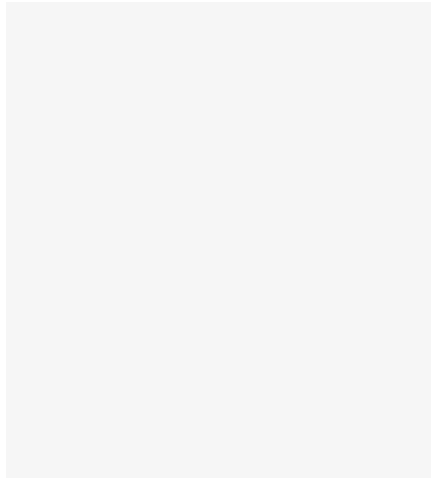
Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty

Messina: Great agents know how to respond to difficult situations and face them head-on. They run toward the challenge, not away from it, and know how to think outside the box. Most importantly, they know when to speak and when to listen, and do not expect to win every situation—choosing instead to be effective over trying to be right.

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John Messina

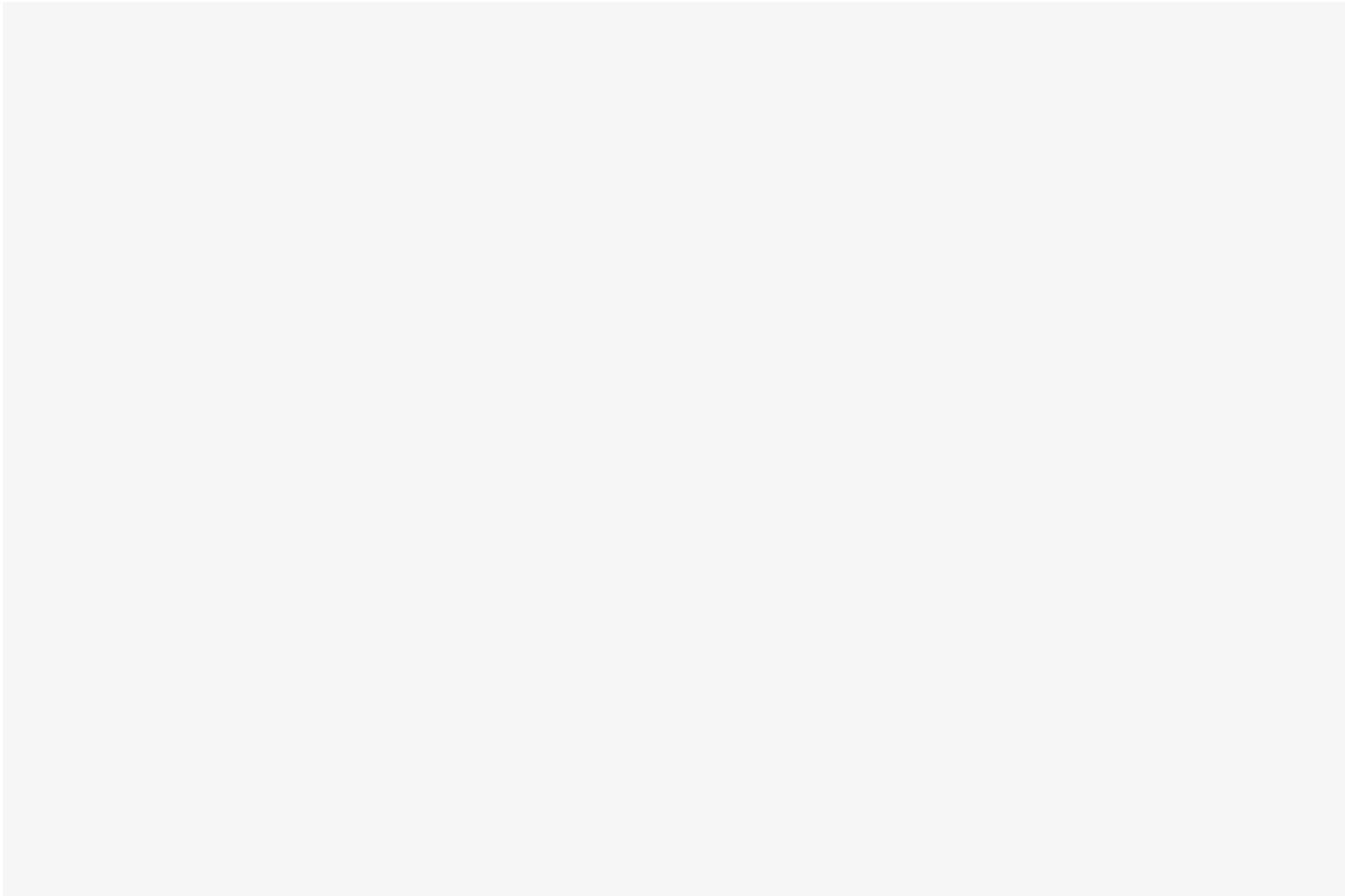
MacDonald: Great real estate agents have a profound passion for this industry, for being a matchmaker, and for embracing technology. I've never met an exceptional agent that isn't always looking for a way to do things better.

Gonzalez: There are so many skills and qualities that a great agent needs to have to be able to be the best at what they do. One that stands out for me is the ability to adjust their approach with respect to different clients, whose desires and objectives are as different as the properties they expect to buy or sell.

What steps did you take to become your own personal best?

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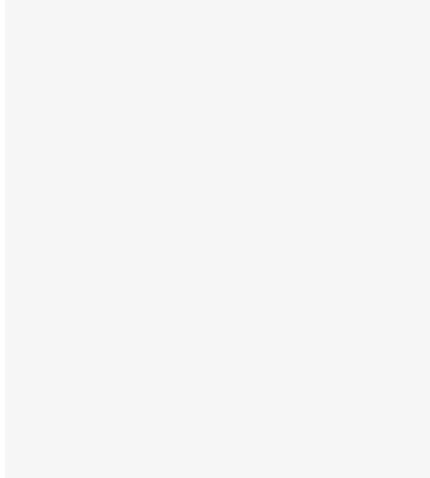


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Karen Burton

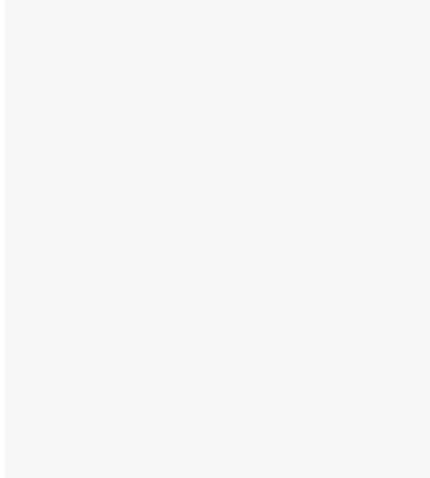
Burton: I'm never satisfied and consistently strive to be better; I actively seek advice, set goals, stay focused, and treat others with respect. I grew up watching and learning from both parents, who had very successful real estate careers—in fact, my 85-year-old mother is still one of the most admired agents in her market. She calls me every morning with a “Real Estate Tip of the Day,” and through these cherished interactions I have grown professionally and personally.

Gonzalez: I have an insatiable need to learn, and have been blessed with incredible mentors throughout my career who have recognized this and facilitated additional learning. While experience is the best teacher, embracing the opportunity to grow through others' experiences has been instrumental for me to be the best that I can be.

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Daniel Gonzalez

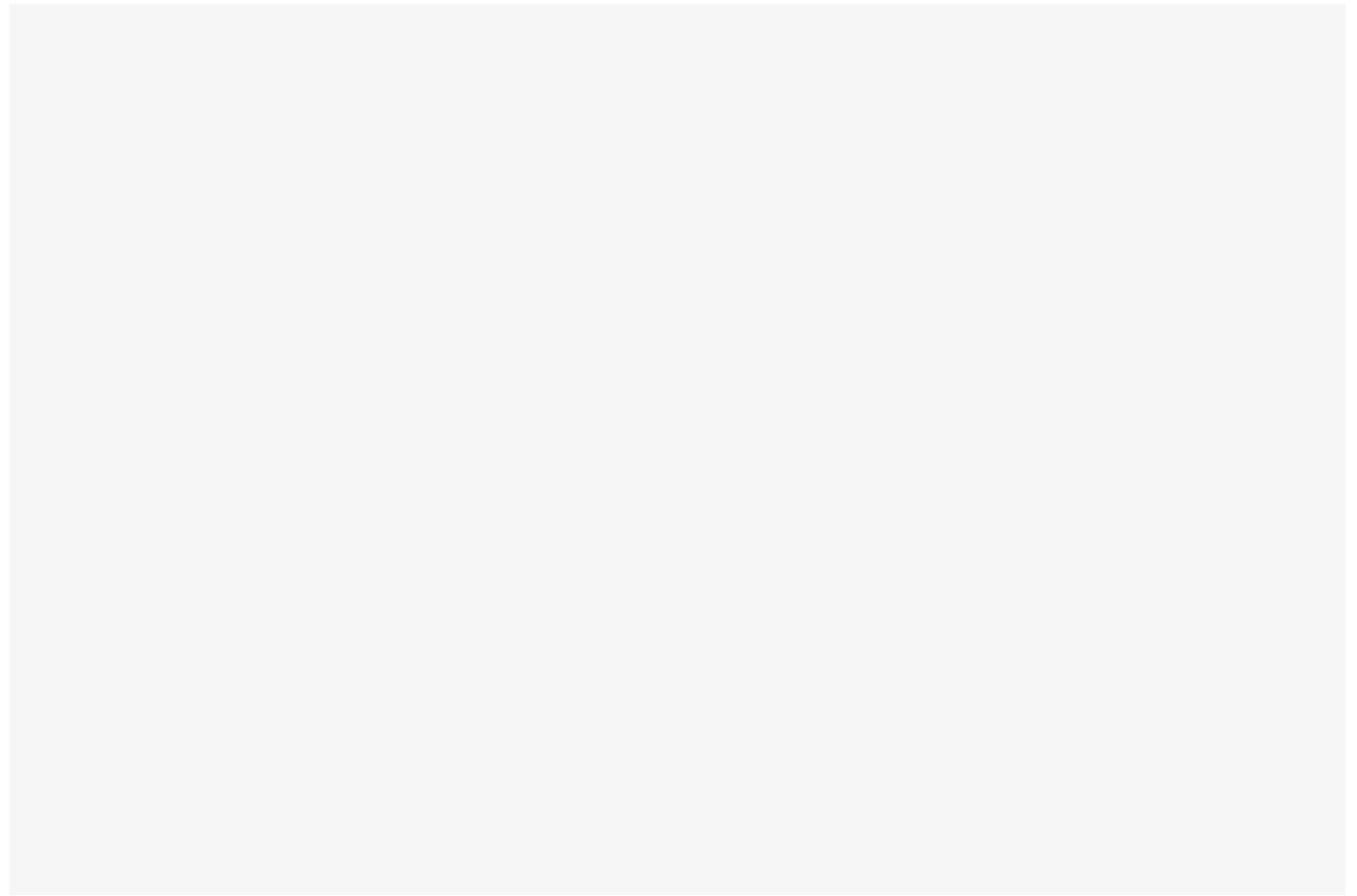
Messina: I concentrated on education and gained experience in different parts of the business. I earned the Graduate Realtor Institute and Senior Real Estate Specialist designations, which have been invaluable. I also worked many ends of the business between residential, commercial, investment, and new construction.

What advice do you have for other agents looking to be the best at what they do?

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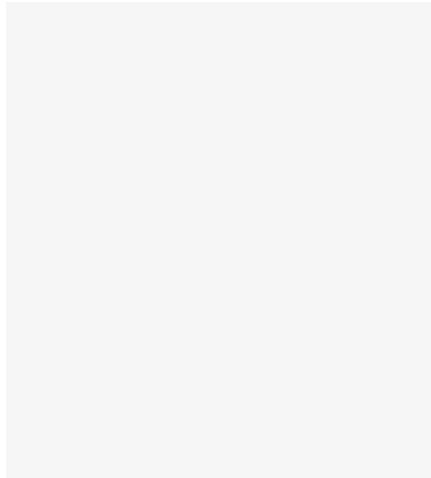
Zeitlin Sotheby's International Realty

Warren: Empathize with your clients' needs, always be reachable, and be truthful, innovative, and knowledgeable about the marketplace where you specialize.

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Marty Warren

MacDonald: Choose a company whose culture and philosophy align with your vision of the best. Have a business plan that supports your vision and know that it will grow with each success, but not overnight. No growth happens without risk, so don't be afraid to take on the challenge when presented the opportunity. The best part of this job is learning from every single transaction.

Messina: Every year, I look at my past performance and start to plan for the upcoming year. I set goals and think about what it will take to meet them. I like the technology side of the business too, and each year I reassess what I could be doing differently or more efficiently.

Burton: If you always put your clients' best interests first, success will follow. Get involved in your community, keep in touch with everyone, and treat fellow agents and co-brokers with respect, as they are equally responsible for driving your success. Lastly, know your inventory—and when you meet with prospective sellers, portray confidence in what you do and how you do it.

Source: [click here](#)