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Chrissy Neumann

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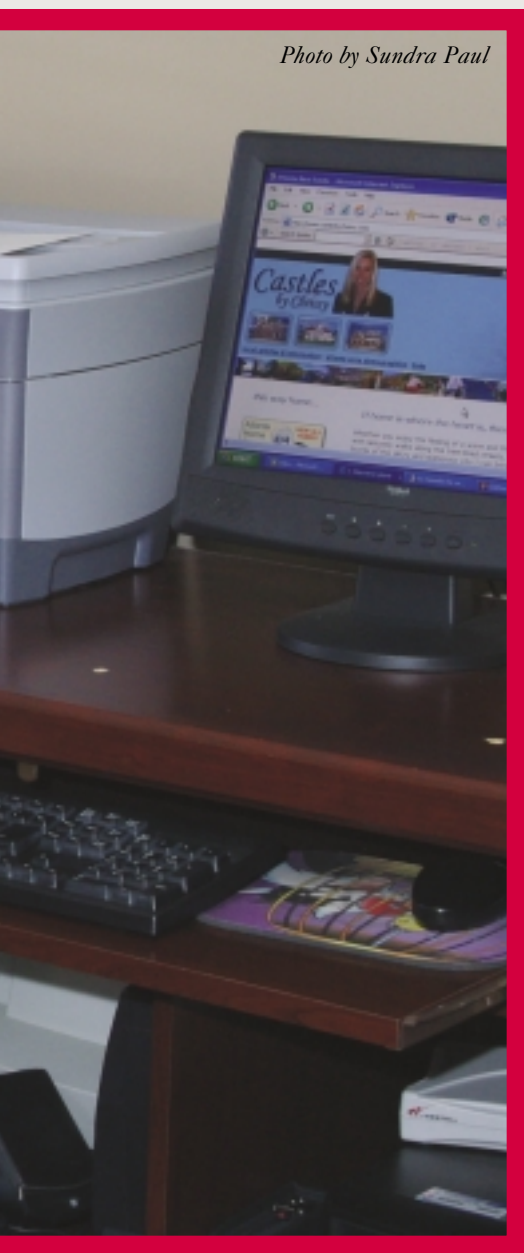
"My mom originally came up with the idea for Tuesday's Tour and Tip" says Chrissy of her weekly newsletter that invites people to her website for a weekly virtual tour that gets over 2,000 hits a month!"

Chrissy Neumaier

Flying Under the Radar, This *Nouveau Agent* Took the Internet as a Springboard for Success

By Joni Strandquest

Photo by Sandra Paul



Chrissy Neumann: "It's been a great marketing tool – my website currently

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Chrissy Neumann gets queasy looking at photos taken of her climbing toward The Summit peak in Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park while she jumped from one rock to another with a 10,000-foot drop below. "If I had known what I was up against," she says, "I don't know that I would have gone on with the climb."

Chrissy learned a valuable lesson on that climb that has served her well. "Baby steps and setting goals can get you to the top – all you have to do is get to the next rock. Don't look back. Don't look down because negative thoughts can kill you."

Chrissy has successfully transferred those maxims to get a strong foothold in real estate, a field that some find as challenging as mountain climbing. During her rookie year as a real estate agent, she grossed \$10 million in sales, an achievement that any seasoned veteran would call a great year. Working somewhat in seclusion from her peers, Neumann quietly and diligently climbed toward the pinnacle of her chosen profession undaunted and undeterred. Ironically, when all was said and done, no one was more surprised at her ultimate success than Chrissy herself.

Like many in real estate, selling homes wasn't her first career choice. Neumann stepped off a sturdy corporate ladder at BellSouth Corporation because she was missing passion for her work. Her life experiences had made her a risk taker. Her mother and brother have relied on commission income for as long as she can recollect.

"I'm a results-driven person and being an agent seemed like it would suit me well," she reveals. "I wanted to sell a service as opposed to a product, and I also wanted to help people." Drawn to the real estate profession by a love of watching community growth and development, an understanding of finance, and an appreciation of houses, Chrissy was licensed in May 2002.

She didn't sell anything her first three months as an agent. Instead of diving headfirst into sales, Neumann says she believed that she needed to hone her skills and develop relationships. She joined the Atlanta Board of Realtors®. She shadowed other agents on the job and attended networking events held by the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce, Buckhead Business Association, and the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

"Seeking real estate leads at these networking events was never my purpose. I networked to learn. My whole reason for going to the functions was to meet people and to increase my knowledge about what was going on within the various Atlanta communities. I was like a sponge soaking in the information," she laughs. "I found that there were ways to help out the community and make great contacts at the same time."

She began a contact database, formulated her marketing plan, and developed her listing presentation materials. "I'm definitely a 'let me get this set up and then go to town' type of person."

Rob Adams, owner of Adams Fairfield Realty, asked Chrissy if she'd like to join the company he and partner/broker Michelle Fairfield had begun. With no experience, Chrissy spearheaded the residential side of the company.

Recollecting how people at Bell South spent time on the Internet during the business day – shopping, surfing, and playing fantasy football, Neumann realized that presence on the web would contribute greatly to her business success.

On her return to Georgia, Chrissy hit the ground running. Her systems were in place. The web site was accessible worldwide and attracting people who wanted to relocate to Metro Atlanta. She began correspondence with people on her ever-growing

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Serendipity occurred when a friend of her family, Bob Hendren, began a service called ListingWare that allows people to search the Multiple Listings through agent web sites. Seeking beta testers for the project, they asked Chrissy if they could develop her site and she agreed. So, while Chrissy and her new husband David were away on their honeymoon cruise in the Caribbean, her website, www.castlesbychrissy.com was created.

contacts' list via a weekly newsletter, 'Tuesday's Tours and Tips.

Neumann also set specific goals. She assumed that selling two \$250,000 houses per month would be reasonable. She set her goal at having \$6 Million in closed transactions by the end of 2003. In fact, she achieved this goal by August, and went on to close \$9.6 Million in business for the year!



"Shaun is the only broker that, rather than being impressed with my first year numbers, convinced me how much better I could do," explains Chrissy of her decision to join Keller Williams. Here, she is shown with Shaun (left), and Co-Regional owners Kay Evans and Bob Kilinski.



Chrissy met husband David while working with high school groups at Peachtree Presbyterian Church. Married for a year-and-a-half, the couple enjoys one of their few quiet moments at home.

Oddly, since she didn't work in a large agency where numbers are measured and goals celebrated, Neumann had no idea that she was doing well. "I realized something was going on when I couldn't handle my own accounting anymore," she explains. It was during a conversation with an accountant that she discovered how much she'd accomplished.

"At first I thought I'd added the numbers wrong or put the wrong formula in my spreadsheet program," she laughs. "No matter what I did or how I added it up, the numbers kept coming out the same." Neumann feels it was a benefit for her to work in a small agency her first year in the business because she was not privy to the measure of others, or to hearing about how different seasons of the year might or might not be slower than others.

Neumann was spurred to change companies after realizing that she wanted a different commission structure as well as an environment where she could be coached and learn additional skills. "It's not just about making money, it's about being the best I can be," she explains.

She chose Keller Williams. Working as a team with her loan officer husband who handles all her

mortgages, Neumann says she has the best of all worlds. She and David work toward the same goal – helping people achieve their home ownership dreams knowledgeably and responsibly. Chrissy says she and David would rather work together, creating a smooth transaction, than any other scenario.

Renee Smithe, a real estate agent with Adams Fairfield considers Neumann a mentor. "She was my agent when I purchased my first house," says Smithe. "Chrissy taught me that educating myself is especially important in real estate. I deal with a lot of agents and I can verify that she is one of the best agents in Atlanta." Smithe appreciates Neumann's high energy, responsiveness, and her willingness to spend extra time with people to assure that they're satisfied and happy.

Neumann's customers are testaments to Smithe's claim.

Holly and Steven Bandel found Chrissy after searching online for Atlanta agents. The couple is presently living in Tampa and moving to Acworth later this month. "Our personalities just clicked over the



Always active, Chrissy and David love the outdoors. From climbing Wyoming's Grand Tetons to bike riding at the Silver Comet Trail, the couple enjoy an active lifestyle. "I love keeping myself challenged," says Chrissy.



Photo by John Clemmer

phone," Holly says. "We wish we had someone like Chrissy selling our home in Florida. We highly recommend her and would definitely use her again." Bandel says Neumann was knowledgeable and responsive, treating them as intelligent buyers. "Our former agent was condescending in tone," Holly says. "We've been very pleased with Chrissy. She respected our budget and worked with us to get what we wanted."

Tori and Erik Bjerke met Neumann when she was interning with another agent. They remained in touch. "She has a warm sincerity and is very personable," Tori says. "She sold our home in two hours! We weren't even really looking to move, but we told her that if anything came up on her radar screen that fit certain parameters, to let us know. If it weren't for her, we wouldn't be in this great house."

Daryl Hudson jokes that people shouldn't be fooled by Chrissy's youth. She can become a tough as nails when the situation calls for it. "She analyzed the information my wife and I gave her, and then showed us the most perfect home we could have imagined. It was the only house we looked at through Chrissy." When the Hudson's made an offer, there were already two other buyers in line. "She really went to bat for us," says Hudson. "Somehow, she convinced the seller that we were the offer that they should accept."

"Chrissy really wanted to make sure we were happy," he says, "and she did."

Chrissy Neumann still loves looking at those pictures of herself climbing the Grand Tetons. Only now she looks at them with slightly different eyes, having already climbed the peaks, and knowing that there are summits still to climb. "I'm really looking forward to the next year, and to setting new goals," she says with an excited voice. "I'm always looking for new challenges, and I'm in a great place right now to climb a few new mountains!" You can be sure, Chrissy won't be looking back, or looking down!

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