Shelley Sakala Cover Story
Article for Shelley Sakala, Realtor
By Dave McMinn

If you've lived in the area awhile, chances are you've seen, heard, or even run into Shelley Sakala. Shelley has lived in the neighborhood for the past 14 years, and has made it a point to consistently market herself and **The Sakala Group** real estate team in the local community. She is a regular contributor to this publication. The other components of her marketing strategy are equally strong, including direct mail, community event sponsorship, Adopt-a-Street, and an instore presence at CVS Pharmacy. If you think she's "everywhere," you'd be correct. And that's by design.

Before Shelley became a licensed Realtor, she worked as a certified Meteorologist for ABC 15. Sure, she can talk about the weather with expertise. But the biggest lesson she learned while working in television was the importance of **marketing**.

TV news is competitive here, with the top 5 news stations all reporting the same stories while fighting for eyeballs. The only real differences between stations are the personalities and the marketing. When you hear positioning statements like "Most Trusted News Station" or "Most Accurate Weather," those are catchy phrases designed to shape how the audience feels about a news station. It's the magic of marketing!

Shelley takes the marketing lessons learned from her time on the news team and applies them to her real estate business. "It's all about standing out from the competition. There are so many real estate agents out there fighting for listings," says Shelley. "It's as competitive as any industry around. If you don't find ways to actively and consistently market yourself – and your listings - you get lost in the shuffle."

Lest you think Shelley is all marketing and no substance, her track record speaks otherwise. She is the #5 ranked realtor in her company (out of 2,400 total agents). "Yes, it's important to market yourself and generate leads," she says. "But if you don't have the chops to get the deals done, your time in real estate will be short lived. You've got to hold your own when it comes to customer service, promoting your listings, staging homes, advising your clients, and negotiating…not to mention managing contract details that can potentially derail a sale."

As any Realtor will attest, it doesn't matter how slick your marketing game is if you forget to dot your i's and cross your t's.

The third part of the recipe for Shelley's success as a Realtor is local expertise. When you're first starting out in real estate most realtors take any piece of business you can get – even if it's on the other side of town. But as your business grows, it becomes increasingly inefficient to properly service a listing on the other side of town. Shelley tells us about the strategy that sets her apart from other Realtors: "Early on, I made the decision to focus my energy on the local

community and become a neighborhood expert. By concentrating on the Norterra and Anthem areas, I'm constantly increasing my knowledge about the local community."

This neighborhood expertise helps Shelley better serve her sellers with everything from pricing, listing descriptions, and home inventory. And her buyers benefit from inside knowledge about the community. "I know which floorplans are the most sought-after," she adds. "I can tell you about the hidden features - and quirks - of each model. I know which elevations have the best porch for hiding Amazon packages, and which backyards see the most critters. For home buyers, there's value in knowing which street goes all-in with Christmas lights, which section of the neighborhood has lots of kids, and which is the quiet cul-de-sac."

As a resident, Shelley keeps her ear to the ground about new restaurants and businesses coming to town. "Here's why that matters," she explains. "Tell prospective buyers at an open house that a new **Dutch Bros** is being built nearby, then watch how quickly their barely interested teens get suddenly excited about the house you're showing. That's just one benefit of being a neighborhood expert."

The final ingredient in her recipe for success is her team of high-performance agents and staff. "I have the best team in the world," Shelley says. "They are all experienced, motivated professionals who work hard and always super-serve our clients. I would not want to do this job without them. As a team, we rank #8 nationally, which is a testament to their talent and their effort."

When she's not helping clients buy and sell homes, she's usually fixing them up. "Remodeling and redecorating are my passion," Shelley tells us. It's a way for me to exercise the creative part of my brain while investing in my own home. The only problem is that I quickly run out of rooms in my house to redecorate." Thankfully, Shelley has found an outlet for her design efforts. "I have been asked for design tips by friends and neighbors more times than I can count. And I'm always happy to help. Decorating is subjective, so I'm flattered when someone asks me for design advice."

Shelley's eye for design has caught the attention of the local TV stations. She's a semi-regular guest on TV segments highlighting the latest design trends, and how they affect real estate prices. The combination of her decorating skills, real estate experience, and comfort level in front of the camera makes her an ideal and sought-after guest for TV. It's great exposure that boosts her marketing presence.

How has all this marketing panned out? 40% of Shelley's business comes from new clients. While the other 60% is made up of repeat customers and referrals. "This tells me two things," Shelley says. "It means my marketing strategy for attracting new business is working. It also tells me **The Sakala Group** is delivering on the promises we make in our marketing messages. Let's face it… EVERYONE knows someone who is a real estate agent. So, when I get a new listing, I know that the seller actively bypassed a friend or family member and hired me,

instead. That's a very high level of trust, and a great motivator for me to make my customers outrageously happy."

To reach The Sakala Group, go to https://www.shelleysakala.com or call (602) 421-2324.