

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE



Shawn Ghiai

Life at the Top

by Michelle Llamas • photography by Mike Moreland

If there is anyone that can be said to have the Midas touch, it is Shawn Ghiai of RE/MAX Metro Atlanta. Over the past decade this unstoppable REALTOR® has built an impressive empire. In fact, he has been so successful in his chosen niche that he practically monopolizes the business in DeKalb County and his average listing has a price tag of \$1.5 million dollars. He is a dominant force and it is nearly impossible to drive through the county without seeing Shawn's face and signs. This real estate "golden boy" rocketed to the top of his game with dizzying speed in his first year in the business and achieved the #1 rank in DeKalb County – a title he has yet to relinquish. He is a member of the RE/MAX Hall of Fame, Top 100 individual agents in the United States and has been a Platinum Club member since 2002. To date, he has sold over three hundred million dollars in real estate.

When asked how he feels about his much deserved success,

Shawn jokes with a smile, "after building my business and achieving the number one rank, it is more difficult to stay on top. The pressure to stay number one is always in the back of my mind!" The outstanding REALTOR's skill, knowledge and sheer drive for success have kept him at the pinnacle of his profession for a decade and he shows no signs of slowing down. Despite becoming a dedicated husband and new father, the German born Persian American has managed to maintain his masterful command of his business. Regardless of how impressive his numbers are, Shawn retains the humility he possessed before his rise to real estate super stardom. He admits with a laugh, "My first sale was 100% pure luck!"

In the face of such extraordinary success one often contends that there must be an extraordinary secret that led to it. What is so incredible about Shawn Ghiai is that there is nothing otherworldly about his chosen methods.



The idea at the core of his business and life philosophy is simple and humble: live by the Golden Rule and success will follow. Shawn has always believed in that age old saying: "honesty is the best policy." "I don't like to sugar coat things. I am honest and I speak from the heart. If it is not in my client's best interest to list their home, I will tell them so," Shawn affirms. "I don't compromise my way of doing business and my clients and peers respect that."

In addition to bulletproof ethics, Shawn has thrived as a result of the time and effort he has invested into his business. "Before I was married, I worked seven days a week and countless hours on developing my brand and business," Shawn recalls. He also credits the supportive atmosphere of the office for helping him achieve success. "The agents at RE/MAX Metro Atlanta are very respectful and helpful to one other. There is no back biting or negativity. We pick each other's brains when we have a hurdle we need to overcome." He also smiles when he describes the friendly, competitive atmosphere. "We are all very competitive and it's healthy. Other agents will come up to me and challenge me and I just say 'bring it on!'" Many members of Shawn's office speak highly of him and his positive attitude and comment on the fact that he is, quite simply, a "nice guy."

Ron Coshatt, CRP, and Associate Broker at RE/MAX Metro Atlanta has had the pleasure of working with Shawn. "I enjoy working with Shawn because of his in depth knowledge of luxury new home construction and commitment to a positive outcome. Shawn is very high energy and focused on the end result, not extraneous details or issues. Working with Shawn greatly increases the possibility of a positive outcome for all parties."

Quality service is another thing that Shawn prides himself in providing. "Going the extra mile" is something Shawn does for his clients on a daily basis. Each and every client is of utmost importance to him and he tries to walk in their shoes. He relates the story of a client that just sold his home and was in the process of cleaning it out to prepare to move. The client seemed overwhelmed by all he needed to get done and he inquired of Shawn where he could find some trash cans. "I ended up going to Home Depot and buying him some trash cans, it was a simple gesture and he appreciated it. I left it up to him whether or not he felt

like reimbursing me for them," says Shawn.

Shawn's tenacity and creativity are also qualities that make him an above average real estate agent. When conventional means will not save a transaction, Shawn will stop at nothing to find a creative solution to make it work. Sometimes, being creative means that the "bottom line" suffers. However, it has never been solely about the money. "I do what I can to save the deal. Greed should always be put aside in favor of what is best for the client," shares Shawn. In turn, Shawn's clients reward his dedication with loyalty and repeat business.

Dan Raudebaugh is a client who has had the pleasure of working with Shawn. "He has the rare ability in the real estate industry to put the deal and his clients first and





with both parties was crucial to getting both homes closed.” Dan has worked in and around the real estate industry for the past 18 years and he describes Shawn’s talent as “exemplary.” Without question, Dan wouldn’t hesitate to recommend him to others.

Shawn’s wealth of knowledge and expertise has also earned him many repeat clients. A marketing graduate from Rutgers University, he is armed with all the proper tools and strategies for marketing success. He is also aware that it takes money to make money and spends a good deal of funds on building his brand and marketing the properties he lists. In addition, Shawn also obtained his builder’s license. This allows him to specialize in new construction. He is able to offer valuable insight on quality construction and the “jargon” that is often used by builders. “The nuances of new construction are more detailed than many clients realize,” adds Shawn.

“We have known Shawn for over 5 years and are currently working through our second real estate sale process with him,” share Delilah Wynn-Brown and John Baker Brown Jr., two of the many satisfied clients that Shawn has had the pleasure of serving. “In working with Shawn he has proven to be a consummate professional with great depth of experience. In this turbulent real estate market he has been an able guide in helping to negotiate ongoing challenges. He has certainly recognized our needs as individuals rather than recommending a cookie-cutter approach to selling our home.”

In addition to their appreciation of his talents, Delilah and John also appreciate Shawn’s warm and caring personality. “We have found Shawn to be comprehensive in his approach to real estate sales as well as thoughtful and considerate, yet candid in his dealings with us. He has gone way beyond the call of duty on several occasions – coordinating contractors, cleaning services and financing along the way. We consider him not only our agent but our friend.”

Equally important to keeping his loyal base of clients

foremost and not worry so much about what is in it for him,” says Dan with much respect. Shawn’s talent for “creative deal making” was applied to Dan’s last home purchase. “I recently worked with Shawn on a deal that involved me purchasing a home from a builder who was one of Shawn’s clients and the same builder purchasing my home. Although Shawn was only getting paid as the listing agent on his client’s home, he had to fill many roles at many different times to make the deal work. His flexibility, positive attitude, and willingness to help with everything from financing, to contracting, to counseling

happy is maintaining a relationship with them. Rather than sending cards or a bottle of wine, Shawn provides items of personal value to each client. For instance, he will assist them with leg work they need done or invest financially in their businesses. "As an agent you have to find out what your client needs that is of true value to them. It's very personal. Many of my clients still contact me after the sale and ask me about questions or things they need. Buying a home is a huge investment and I like my clients to know I am there for them," says Shawn with conviction.

Shawn arrived in the United States in 1983. He resided in New Jersey until he moved to Atlanta in 1998. He chose the city after hearing from friends and seeing the city himself while visiting for the Olympics. He began working with a local builder as the Chief Financial Officer and handling multiple companies. "During the late 1990's the economy slowed down a bit and the builder I worked for was a little disappointed with the sluggish sales. He recommended I get my license and try my hand at sales," recalls Shawn. After selling his first home, "he tasted success" and was hooked. He set out to make a name for himself. What followed was a grueling schedule working seven days a week that paid off in huge dividends.

Now happily married and the proud father of a lovely 17 month old daughter, Shawn has had to tailor his schedule to maintain both his young family and his business. He maintains balance by "working hard and playing hard." He makes time to travel and learn about new cultures. He and his family have been to Europe and the Far East. One of his passions is scuba diving and exploring reefs teeming with sea life. His future travel plans include a trip to Australia to dive in the Great Barrier Reef.

Shawn's future continues to hold many great leaps in his business and personal life. His newest project is a planned 24 home luxury subdivision called Trillium. Shawn is excited about this new venture since marks his first foray into being involved in developing packages for buyers directly with developers and architects. "The price range will be \$500,000 - \$600,000. It will be affordable luxury.

This is our answer to the demands of the current housing market. I enjoy challenging myself and getting involved in bigger and better things. It is also rewarding to be able to create something. From the beginning, I have been involved in every aspect of development, home plans, pricing and marketing."

When asked what advice he would give to those real





estate agents just beginning their careers, Shawn smiles graciously. "You have to go the extra mile and be willing to compromise. Always put greed aside. It is important to network and put the time into your business. Check in to your office everyday and make sure you have a good mentor. I have also realized the importance of specializing in one area. Pick your area of expertise and stick to it!" He also stresses the importance of passion for what you do. True success comes to those who love what they do.

These past ten years have been exciting for Shawn. He says with a jovial chuckle, "If people are tired of seeing my picture, they will have to leave DeKalb County to get away from me!" He relates that he plans to be in the business for at least another ten years and even if he wanted to quit it would still be a long process. "My business is like a speeding locomotive, it is difficult to stop a train once it is already going!" He intends to maintain his number one status for as long as he remains a REALTOR® and when he decides to throw in the towel, he will have left a dynasty in his wake.

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