



There is something unique and alluring about Los Angeles real estate. From the glittering lights of the Hollywood Hills to the lush landscapes of Beverly Hills and everywhere in between, there's a landmark to be found unlike any other in the world. So it requires a unique agent to represent it — someone like Gwen Banta of Sotheby's International Realty. As someone who has immersed herself in the business, soaked up every bit of knowledge within reach, and has a genuine passion for the industry, Gwen is the one that domestic and international clients so often return to.

What started out with a personal real estate investment in 2002, turned into a full-fledged successful career for Gwen. "As I started finding properties for

myself, I found that I really loved the strategies that were involved, and the more I did it, the more I wanted to be involved in the transactions," she says. "I was doing all the research and knew what each property was worth and that's when I realized I was the one who should also be doing the negotiating." And with that, Gwen obtained her license and was well on her way.

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Gwen's vast knowledge, experience, and dedication to customer service are just a few of the reasons nearly half of her business stems from repeat clients or referrals. However, it doesn't take beyond a minute or two of being introduced to Gwen that you also get a sense of her warm personality and great sense of humor. "I think my clients enjoy working with me because I work really hard on their behalf, I'm funny, and I have great snacks," she says with a laugh. "Searching for a house can be hard work; food makes people comfortable and happy, and it makes the experience more social."

At the very core of Gwen's business are ethics and honesty, something she never strays from. "Honesty comes before everything else. We have to be honest and ethical in everything we do and sometimes that means not getting the sale," explains Gwen. "But I'd rather not get the sale because I've been honest and disclosed everything than to do otherwise. Fudging the rules is not a benefit to my client and certainly not to my reputation as an agent."

Gwen is always eager to learn about anything that will have a positive impact on how she serves her clients. In fact, it's the one piece of advice she'd give to anyone thinking of getting into the business. "This job is so much more than just loving houses and getting licensed. You have to understand how to run a small



business and be schooled in more than just real estate," she says. "There are contracts involved and a tremendous amount of psychology, along with negotiation, social media, and marketing. I would even recommend taking courses in landscaping or feng shui. You don't have to become an expert in these things, but you should have some working knowledge of what they are so you can better serve your clientele."

Over the course of her career, Gwen has been recognized by her peers and clients alike. In 2014, she ranked among Trulia's top agents and was one of LA's top rated real estate agents in 2015. However, you only reach those heights by branching out, as Gwen has proven. Together with Tory Herald, Gwen recently launched East West Real Estate Specialists as a way to assist those in the Asian market with their Los Angeles real estate needs. "I went to China a couple of years ago to meet with potential clients and just fell in love

with that area of the world and the people," she says. "Since then, we've been doing a lot of outreach not only in China, but in Japan and India, too. Every day it's something new and exciting and it's broadened our horizons so much."

Gwen looks forward to seeing both businesses expanding in the years to come and has no intention of slowing down. "It would be nice to have a little more time for social activities but I don't think that's going to happen any time soon. Probably when I'm in my casket I'll be writing up a contract! I love what I do so it really doesn't feel like work to me."

Outside of real estate, Gwen enjoys spending time with her family, friends, and her dog. She is also a writer, and recently completed her first novel, *The Fly Strip*, published by Waldorf Publishing and available in bookstores in September, 2016.

Gwen Banta

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