

featuredagent

magazine

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If Minnesota REALTOR® Janelle Pierzina looks familiar, there's a good reason. She is one of the most popular contestants ever to compete on the long-running CBS reality show *Big Brother*. During her three seasons on the show, including an All-Star edition, she set the record for most days spent in the *Big Brother* house (177!) and most individual competitions won in a single season. Janelle also won multiple America's Choice awards and perhaps, most impressively, won the coveted Fan Favorite award, cementing her status as America's favorite player and one of the show's most skilled competitors.

Excelling in a game where strategy, diplomacy, and likeability are keys to success, positioned Janelle perfectly for her transition into real estate. "I'm an extremely competitive person and real estate is a competitive arena," she says. "I love to win for my sellers, and net them the most money possible. And when I'm working with my buyers I want them to pay as little as possible." But she recognizes there's more to real estate than just making the deal. "I also really love people, and they tend to feel very comfortable working with me," she says. "Putting all those things together made getting into real estate feel like a natural fit."

Janelle initially got her real estate license in 2008, and worked in the rental division for the Corcoran Group in New York City. After taking a few years off to start a family, she hit the ground running in her native Minnesota, working for Edina Realty with clients throughout the Twin Cities. "It's been going great," she says. "I met all the goals for my five-year plan my first year." Those achievements included being named Rookie of the Year for Edina Realty and earning President's Circle honors.

One of Janelle's long-term goals is to have a business that is 100% repeat and referral customers, and she's well on her way to reaching that, with an estimated 65% of her current clients falling into that category. "I really like working with all different types of people and putting them at ease — anyone from someone really high strung to someone who is very quiet," she says. "I think I'm good at making people feel comfortable, and making the buying or selling process less intimidating. It's not unusual for me to become friends with clients after the transaction is over." Her client base is an interesting mix of Millennials, members of Generation X and of course, *Big Brother* fans, who are thrilled at the chance to work with one of their favorites — and maybe even get some inside scoop on the show.

Making sure her clients leave a transaction satisfied and knowing that she put their interests first is what guides the way Janelle conducts her business. "I try to be as honest as possible at all times and keep the focus on the clients," she explains. "I never lose sight of the fact that it's their money, and I keep them as informed as possible at every stage of the transaction."

Janelle's third stay as a house guest on *Big Brother* came during season 14, when she served as a mentor to other contestants. So it's no surprise that she also has some advice to share for those who may be thinking about starting a real estate career. "I would tell someone who is new to the business to be patient, it takes a little bit to get going," she says. "I'm a very impatient person, so when I first started I was go, go, go. But it's very important to focus on the relationship you have with your clients and not just on the transaction. Real estate always has been and always



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will be a people business.” She also wants new agents to know that the perception of real estate as a “flexible” career is accurate — but not in the way they might think. “Yes, it’s flexible, but you pretty much work constantly. I’m always on the phone at night. If a client calls and needs me, I’m always going to answer.”

Janelle’s prominence is not only an asset to her work as a REALTOR®, it’s a benefit to her charity work as well. She supports Give Kids the World, a charity that provides cost-free, Florida vacations to children with life-threatening illnesses. She is also involved with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity and volunteers her time at the local animal shelter.

Everything that contributed to Janelle’s success and



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popularity on Big Brother comes together in her rapidly growing real estate career. “I need change in my life constantly,” she says. “So I love that every client is different, every situation is different and I’m not doing the same things over and over. That’s what keeps me going.”

Now that summer is here, you’ll find Janelle enjoying all of the area’s outdoor pastimes, including

biking, hiking and spending time at her lake home on Deer Lake in Northern Minnesota. She loves spending time with her husband, Jess, and their three children: Violet Anne, Lincoln and Stella.

As her business continues to grow, Janelle is focused on her ultimate goal of working entirely by referral. “I want my clients to be so happy that they just keep working with me and telling others about me, too.”

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