



All successful businesses start with a brilliant idea. When Michelle Acosta decided to join her husband, Art, in real estate, they paid close attention to the rapid changes that were happening in the industry and saw an opportunity to create something different. “We wanted to create a hybrid of a traditional brokerage and a flat-fee brokerage,” Michelle explains. And with that idea, The Associates Realty Group was born.

To say agents found the hybrid brokerage idea appealing would be an understatement. Open just under two years, they currently have approximately 175 agents, and that

number continues to grow. “The agents are drawn to the combination of a flat-fee model, combined with the support and training they would get in a traditional brokerage,” Michelle says. “That training includes up-to-the minute tips for using social media and a monthly technology training where we’ll review new apps or talk about best practices for using Zillow, Trulia and Yelp.”

Michelle also shares her marketing savvy with the team, and takes pride in the company’s online and print marketing. “Along with residential, we have agents who do commercial, some focus on leases and some work with REO properties. I still have a few REO accounts of my own,” Michelle explains. “The bottom line is that no matter what type of real estate we’re focusing on, we are always looking out for the best interests of our clients.”

A values-driven company, Michelle explains that she and Art prioritize God, family and finance, in that order. “We definitely live that and focus a lot on our own and our agents’ families,” Michelle says. “One of the reasons we decided to go with the flat-fee model was so the agents could earn commission and put a lot of that

back into their business and back into their families. We encourage agents to take a significant portion of their commissions and put it back into their business and their marketing.”

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As someone who is regularly training and developing agents, Michelle says that anyone considering a career in real estate needs to be comfortable with technology. “It’s so much of what this business is now. You have to be able to understand the consumer, understand Millennials and understand technology.” Additionally, she stresses the importance of positivity and staying in touch with the human side of what can sometimes be a transaction-focused business. “I believe that what you put out, you’ll get back,” Michelle says. “You might lose some on one and win some on another but overall, if you’re positive and kind, you’ll get out of this business what you put into it.”

Michelle is understandably proud of the business she and Art have built together. “This has been our brain-child, our baby. We’ve put a lot of ourselves in this business to grow it the last two years and that’s something I’m very proud of.” As proud as she is of the business, her family is an even greater source of pride. “I have two small children — one in pre-school and one in kindergarten, and I volunteer at their schools at least two days a week.”

For Michelle and everyone at The Associates Realty Group, the future appears filled with possibility. “We feel very strongly about the potential of our business model,” Michelle says. “Our plan is to continue to grow The Associates and empower our agents to take control of their careers.”

Michelle Acosta

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