



Melissa Gustafson Turned A Passion For Renovating Homes Into A Successful Career With Keller Williams Success Realty

Gustafson shares her path from medical assistant to top 20 percent of brokers in the marketplace in Barrington, Illinois.

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EE: How did you first get involved with the real estate industry? MG: I have had an uncontrollable thirst for art, design, and architecture ever since I was a kid. As an adult, my boyfriend and I started buying and renovating homes! From demo day to picking and choosing the perfect details for the finished product, I loved every aspect of it. I found myself searching for homes for friends and was frequently being called upon for design advice. Real estate seemed like the next logical step. It's a lot different than the medical field I came from, but I find comfort knowing I'm still helping people daily with something important in their lives.

EE: What do you love about the industry? MG: Incredibly, I love everything about real estate: meeting new people, the thrill of the hunt, making people cry with excitement when I tell them they just beat 10 other offers to get the home of their dreams, helping veterans find a home

base, guiding buyers through renovation loans, walking families through the door of a bigger house to welcome a new baby or helping the empty-nesters downsize to their perfect paradise. Every single day is different, but I know each day will be eventful. EE: What do you wish you can change in real estate? MG: I honestly can't think of anything I'd wish to change in real estate. Every seller, every buyer, every realtor and every lender is different. Pursuing your authenticity is what sets us all apart. There is nothing better than the thrilling calm that comes over me when I meet clients for the first time and we just mesh. EE: What is the biggest change you've seen in the industry since you've started out? MG: I haven't been a realtor for decades, but in the years I've been active, I have already seen changes in technology, which I'm embracing. With listings readily available online to shoppers, photos need to be on point—they are a critical piece to the seller's first showing. Empty spaces are hard to envision, but with the help of virtual staging you can turn any vacant space into a dream home. No industry is immune to innovations—my brokerage is constantly releasing new tools to help everyone. Social networking, pre-marketing advertisements... you have to adapt or you'll be overlooked. It's worth investing my time to be quick to react to changes. I'm sure 2019 will be full of new technologies and I'm ready to dive in a reap the rewards. EE: What excites you about the future of the industry? MG: Real estate is not just a "buy and sell" industry—it's a lifelong investment and an asset. With new technologies coming out on a regular basis, I foresee more buyers buying properties from a distance, without ever stepping foot through the door. Maybe one day I'll be setting up showings in virtual reality, walking through homes 3,000 miles away, turning on lights and opening cabinets, knocking down a wall and show homes renovated before they buy. Whatever the future holds, I look forward to being a part of it.