**Brokers Sharpen Brand Value to Invigorate Agents**

**Special Episode**

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([00:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You are listening to drive with NAR, the REALTOR® to REALTOR® series powered by REALTOR® Magazine. Listen, as real estate pros, talk tools of the trade and share stories of inspiration. Get ready to step up your business. What's going on everybody? I'm your girl, Marki Lemons Ryhal, host of Drive With NAR, the REALTOR® to REALTOR® series. And I hope that some of us have had the opportunity to disconnect from everything that we're hearing online. I am here at NAR NXT, that there is love for our industry, that we know that we can overcome any obstacle. I have the opportunity to interview brokers from across the country on tools and strategies that they're implementing with their agents. And we're not talking about any old brokers, we're talking about top performing brokerages from different organizations. Yes, we are the broker owners, but it's not about us. It is about the needs and the wants of the agent who we attracted to align with us to help buyers and sellers in today's real estate market. So without further ado, I would like to bring Valerie Belardo to the stage broker owner of RE/MAX at Home. Welcome Valerie.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([01:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

We also have coming to you hot from none other than Houston, Texas. Tiffany Curry, broker owner of Berkshire Hathaway Service, Tiffany Curry and Company REALTORS®. And we have Nova Tower with us, broker owner, partner of Waypoint Broker Collective. And I don't know if you had to also be beautiful in order to be on this panel, but these are some of the smartest minds in real estate today and they are also beautiful and I like to just point that out because it means that we putting extra work in. I have some questions for you. What kind of pain points are you hearing about most from agents in your market?

**Nova Tower** ([02:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well, you know, just like today when you're going to speak on stage you get a little nervous. My agents get nervous every single year in the beginning of the year. They always think, how am I ever going to do what I did last year? And so my job is to try and help them over that hump, get rid of all that noise they're hearing out there and make them feel a little bit more confident.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([02:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You know what I told someone, I decided not to be a member of Facebook mastermind groups, that they do not monitor the group because that is a very big pain point and you stated noise, there's a lot of noise. And that means to me we need to communicate more now than ever before with the agents in our office so they will know the difference between factual and non-factual information. Tiffany, what kind of pain points are you seeing down there in the great state of Texas that you're hearing about from agents in your market?

**Tiffany Curry** ([03:29](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well, thanks Marki. If you guys know Texas, sometimes we consider ourselves the great nation of Texas <laugh>, even though we do know we're a state, I would say interest rates. Interest rates, interest rates, interest rates. We are not selling as much as what we were doing last year because of the change in the fluctuation of the market. So, our prices we just got our averages back, have only come down by $4,000. In Houston, however, the rates have soared over 2%. So that has really hit us hard across the state. The great thing about Houston is that we are a huge market. We have tons of land, so our prices don't get as overinflated as the rec rest of the country. However, we have still felt the slowdown. We have at least a 40% decline in what we were doing before. And it's really about the price, the cost of owning a home. The interest rates have hit us hard but our prices have not come down enough with the market to meet that demand.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([04:27](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

We had the opportunity a few weeks ago to interview a couple of veterans and what I never realized until I had the opportunity to interview them is that the VA does not market VA loans to veterans. That is a huge opportunity for us as REALTORS® due to the fact that they don't have mortgage insurance protection. That means that the cost of ownership is lower for them. So even though we're seeing those high interest rates, I want us to start thinking about the solution marketing to veterans.

**Tiffany Curry** ([05:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You know what? I have a personal client that's closing on Friday and he is a veteran and he is buying a house for $1.2 million with zero down and he's actually going to get $1,600 back at closing. So interest rates were not a major factor for him. So it's ironic that you mentioned that because we are getting our A team MRP certified, we're getting everybody military relocation professionals certified because we are going to flip to that market. You want to have alliances during this time. You are not going to make it at a high level if you do not have partnerships and people that specialize in things that can bring that knowledge to your brokerage where you can partner together. And we have two military veterans partners that are helping us and they gave us the facts that Houston is the number one market for relocation well for retirees from the military and we had no idea. So that's the market that we're about to go.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([05:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

After. I love it. Own your niche and your local market. And Nova, what about you?

**Nova Tower** ([06:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, um, I like what you said when you said um, focus on the solutions and I think one thing that we are talking about a lot in our neck of the woods is that this market shift feels different than past shifts that we've seen because what we have that's unique is I think the status. Something like 90% of homeowners across the country have a rate below four and a quarter. You also have the baby boomers as a generation holding onto property longer than ever. And so these influences are having a real impact on supply and that feels like a new challenge for those of us who have been in the industry for a while. And what was inspiring to me here, being here at the NAR convention, I sat in on the public policy committee, meeting and to hear that NAR is also thinking about that and they're also working on that and actively working on policy changes that will help us face that challenge in the coming years was really inspiring to me and something that I'll carry back to my agents as well to share with them.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([07:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you. We have a question from the audience and I think that each of us would love to answer this question. What additional benefits can you offer to seasoned agents? The agents rarely come to meetings because they feel like they know everything there is to know. And I'll start as a 4 year veteran of the real estate industry. And what I have realized is that change is the only constant that exists. And right now we're seeing a faster rate of change. What I would like to encourage people is to stay up to date on trends and what is new because of technology. And if we do not do that, we actually lower our return on our investment and our return on time. It is shameful to be the oldest person in the room and earn the least amount of money on your time because you did not come to class. But I know that everybody here is a veteran.

**Valerie Belardo** ([07:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I've been a realtor for 36 years and so I have a lot of agents in my office that have been in the real estate business for quite some time. So I think it's really important when I put out that I'm having a meeting, I have to make the topic very interesting for them. I have to tell them the benefit of exactly what they're going to get, how to get an extra deal by talking about assumable mortgages. What don't you know about an assumable mortgage? We talk about clue reports, things that we forget that can help us make or break a deal. So there's some kind of prize someplace I'll have stickers underneath of a chair who wins it. It's, it's usually our company's uh, stuff. Uh, but they love it and sometimes I'll give out some gift cards and so that makes them come because they want that. It sounds so silly but you know, we all talk about how people will come when there's food. They come when there's a gift and they don't know what it is. And what I supply after the meeting, I will give information to everyone after the meeting. I do record it and I do allow it on Zoom but I don't tell them it's going to be on Zoom until that day because if I do, they don't show up.

**Tiffany Curry** ([09:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So I am celebrating my 17th year anniversary. I would say for sure the traditional style meetings have to be revamped. We don't do them that way. 97% of my agents have more years in this business than I do, but they always attend the meetings. And the reason being is because we're not doing the traditional status quo. First off, the meetings don't need to be too consistent in terms of some people do every week, we do every other week. But it has to be a value add. It has to be a reason for them to show up. And you hit it on the nail trends. I'm attending this conference so when I go back home I have some huge hot topics that I'm going to bring back to them and that's something that they didn't have to spend thousands of dollars to travel to get. So when you are out there, we stay ahead of the curve, we watch what's going on.

**Tiffany Curry** ([09:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I've had to do that in order to survive. I started at the end of 2006 and the market was tanking. It was short sales, foreclosures and people weren't buying, you know, everything just went belly up. And so I had to get creative so I had to find new clients. So I had to think different and I had to create an opportunity for myself. And so every meeting that we have in our company, it's an opportunity. So we have experts to come in, inspectors to tell what's the difference between an inspection that's going to be geared towards the VA versus what's traditional so that they know what to look for. And also with the lender, how the loan process goes and what they need to know. So they're showing up not because it's a meeting, they're showing up because they need the knowledge.

**Nova Tower** ([10:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I love this question too. And I think for us at Waypoint, it all comes back to our company culture. And I think part of our culture is almost inherently shaped by our size and our structure. So we're a smaller group, we're a group of 12 agents, but our structure in that is really unique that seven of us are partner owners. So we're a broker owned and operated company, but not by one or two brokers at the top we are a collective. And because of that, there's a real true sense that we are invested in each other, that my success depends on your success and your success depends on mine. And the culture that creates is one where we are really motivated to show up for each other and to push each other. So when there's a company meeting or there's an event going on, I think our culture helps to drive attendance because there is a knowing that when you show up, a benefit is coming to you regardless what the topic is.

**Valerie Belardo** ([11:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I would also say that among our seven partners, between us we have more than 80 years of experience in the business. And I learn something every single time I am in a room with one of them. There is no such thing as having all the knowledge ever. And so selfishly I know that when I show up I'm going to gain something. The other thing about the culture is when you have a market like this, a turbulent market, celebrating each other's successes is beautiful but almost more important is carrying each other through the hardships. And that's the cultural element that we have in our small sort of family style agency where if you've had a loss and we know as realtors we have losses in this business, it's hard. And that feeling of defeat, it can consume you. And so to have a group that you know you can lean into if you need to noodle out, you know a problem in your business, a challenge you're facing in a contract, knowing that you have that level of expertise to lean into is what keeps people showing up at the conference table at every event.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([12:48](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Excellent. What are some specific initiatives your company has implemented to ease some of those stressors that exist today for your agents Nova?

**Nova Tower** ([12:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So this one is really exciting for us. Waypoint became the first and only agency in Maine to be fully green designated through NAR. And we did that as a group together, which was not easy to do by the way. For starters, the infrastructure for that in-person learning didn't exist in Maine. There was not an organization to handle the credentialing. There were no instructors in Maine to teach the course. So I reached out to NAR and they worked with me to help create that infrastructure. So that now exists in Maine and we imported an instructor from Massachusetts, an incredible instructor, um, shout out to Craig Foley. But all of that was not the hardest part. The hardest part was getting 12 high performing real estate professionals to clear their calendars for two days in spring market on short notice. But we did it. And I say that because it speaks to the dedication that we all had to doing this together.

**Nova Tower** ([13:55](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And the reason for that, and I'm getting to your question, the reason for that is, you know, I think sort of two things is one is it was a recognition that investing in sustainability in your business is just smart business. I don't think I probably have to argue that point too much, but just to say, you know, when we live in a time where you have companies like GM and ExxonMobil investing millions and millions of dollars in sustainable infrastructure, you have the SEC coming out and mandating that publicly traded companies have to start reporting on their environmental impact and states, everywhere, states and governments committing to massive pledges for 2030 and 2050. So this is coming for all of us and I think it's smart business practice. But more importantly for us at Waypoint, and this is the real meat of it, is we recognize that this was a shared personal value for us. And so as an agency we made a choice to come together around this shared personal value. And when you can marry smart business practice with personal value, now you have agents who are fired up about being a part of your brand and they're committed and they're loyal.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([15:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And what I know for a fact is you are passionate about green. I am. But you're not thinking right. Just about today's you said 2030 and 2050, right? That's right. You green needs to hire you. I'm just going to say that <laugh>. Thank you.

**Nova Tower** ([15:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And you know what, I wanna say one more thing about Green because I think this is really important for the realtors listening. The green designation, it was not the end goal for us, it was the launching platform and we did it as an agency. But one agent. If you're sitting out there thinking, you know, I'm at a company, there's 500 agents, we're never going to be able to get everybody to do that together. You don't need to because one agent, the access is there. It is very easy. You can go online, you can get the green designation and one agent getting that is powerful. Because we all know you're never just one agent. You're an entire sphere. And it's amazing to do that. We did it as a company because for us it was something more than that. It was not just touching our individual spheres, but it was amplifying that message to the entire community.

**Nova Tower** ([16:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And we're able to do that because we're small and we're nimble. But I think all agents should be really taking that responsibility because you don't want to wait. If you are doing this five, 10 years from now because everyone around you is doing it. You, you're already too late. It takes time to build this expertise. It takes years to build this expertise. So get started. And the green designation is that great platform because it gives you the foundational learning and the resources and the ongoing support through membership with Green to build that expertise and benefit your community.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([16:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Tiffany, what are some specific initiatives your company has implemented to ease some of those stressors for your agents?

**Tiffany Curry** ([16:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well I love what Nova is saying because if you guys notice she's talking about culture more than sales. And I think that's the biggest takeaway. The culture is, is the biggest thing for us. We have accountability partners through our mastermind and masterminds are so important because these are smaller groups where people get together and they work on things that they're really great at. We also have a session on things that they're really weak at. We do have an agreement that people sign in order to be a part of the mastermind that they will not compete against intentionally one another so that they have that sense of community and it's collaboration over competition when people come in. Because you can sell real estate anywhere. As you guys all know, agents can hop around based off commission splits or based off the next shiny new object that is not really what you want to build a culture on.

**Tiffany Curry** ([17:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And so that's why I think culture is such a big thing. Community and accountability partners, for their business is the biggest takeaway for our people because they do not feel alone. We have all these external factors that are going on right now and people are scared. I know a lot of companies got comfortable with doing just the zoom models. I know companies that do the hybrid models. We used to do the hybrid model but we went back to actually focusing on the in-person because we needed to take care of the person's total soul. Now that's something that's, it's not sales related, but you have to understand if you can't perform at what you need to do as if you are not taken care of here. And we recognize that within our company, that's a big deal. Especially because real estate is such a lonely industry.

**Tiffany Curry** ([18:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Your agents have things that that are going on in their personal and their professional lives in addition to deals falling apart or clients taking their time. They also have things going on at home. They also, those that are uh, have families at home are wondering, okay, why are you keep doing this? Why are you investing so much time to this and the money is not coming back like it was before? And so we don't overlook that. We actually talk about that because when you can sit down and give a person, a community, a family that's bigger than just I'm going to move over here, I'm going to move over there. It's like I'm not just coming to the office, I'm coming to like our playground. This is my safe space. And I love that component of it too because right now is a time that we have to specialize in niches.

**Tiffany Curry** ([19:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>, I've always told people your wealth is in your niche now even more than ever. There's going to be so much opportunity. People are talking about all the chaos. There's going to be so much opportunity for those that take advantage of it and those that separate themselves from the pack. So with us, all of our agents are getting their ABR company-wide. We are all getting our ABR. In doing that, of course I have to have one. And each time one of our people get their ABR, they're all signed up, some virtually, some in person. We're giving them the recognition of getting that and we're celebrating them in person and we're sending out customized material. We're preparing it in our marketing team so that they can branch it out to their clients to let them know what that means and how that actually benefits them. So we're all in. And I think that goes a long way.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([19:55](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I love the ABR. Once I came into real estate and I became a REALTOR® member and I realized that the pre-license course does not teach us how to sell real estate, I earned the A BR and 2003. In 2004 I was in the top 10% of realtors in the city of Chicago. I closed $12 million in volume my first year selling real estate full time. And the reason that I even have the opportunity to sit on this stage today is because of the designations and certifications offered by the National Association of REALTORS® through their society and their council. And I've always exceeded whatever that average income is and it started with the ABR right now it's one thing that I think every broker should do based on what is going in the market is that their agent should earn the ABR and the SRS so that they can be prepared on how to negotiate their value. Valerie, absolutely, what are you doing?

**Valerie Belardo** ([21:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So I also encourage them to take the C2EX because I think that is a really great program from NAR and that takes you exactly where you are and exactly where you need to be. So when I took it the first time I thought, because I've done it twice now <laugh>, I took it the first time. I know everything. I've been in the business 36 years, this is going to be cake. Guess what? I did not know everything. And <laugh>, it's kind of surprised you when you were doing it. So I really enjoyed it. And so I encourage my agents to take it when they do take it, they're surprised because they think the same way. We all think we know everything. We've already done that. We have that experience and we really don't. So I'm encouraging that through all my agents and they're really leaning into it.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([21:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I actually feel sorry for the broker who thinks that this is my company, this is my way in today's society. I 100% believe that they're going to have a harder time if they do not pivot to the personality of the agents in which they serve. Because we are to be of service to them. What do you see as the primary challenges brokers are facing when it comes to agent retention right now and what should brokers be doing to overcome those obstacles?

**Valerie Belardo** ([22:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You know, I think that it's really important that you know each one of your agents. So as the broker, it is my job to encourage them and to find out where's their pain point. Everybody's pain point is completely different. So I have to lean into what's their pain point and you know, so every single month I send them statistic reports and I always write a handwritten note. I worked for a different broker before and every month she sent me a handwritten note one month she didn't send it to me and I was like, huh, she must not really care about me. That's exactly how I felt. So I know every month it takes me quite a bit of time and I write great job or I say or I see that somebody's not doing so great. So what do I need to do to help you out?

**Valerie Belardo** ([23:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well why don't we get together? Let's have a cup of coffee, let's talk about something that's really important to you. And when I do that and I find out what's going on, it's usually something going on in their life that I need to alleviate that for them and help them move forward with real estate. So I'll say, Hey, let's do a class together. Why don't we have a cup of coffee? Would you like to do some prospecting together? How's a way to get new listings? And I will do it with them individually and I do also do it for a group. But I find that doing individually with them really makes them feel important in that I care about their business.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([23:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I want to commend you for doing that. That says a lot. But it also goes back to the personality. I'm pretty sure that the agents who are with you are with you because they like how you make them feel. They feel good being with you. And it's not just about a compensation split. Somebody could offer them substantially more money and it would mean absolutely nothing to them. Tiffany.

**Tiffany Curry** ([24:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well I'm going to say, and it may be unpopular, it's important on who you hire. I'm going to say that again. It's important on who you hire. If you are just a shop that are collecting bodies, you're going to continue to have issues in terms of retention because you're picking up people that are just hopping from place to place. If that's their pattern, that's probably going to continue to be their pattern. So when we interview people, we actually have three interviews with them. The first time is over the phone and then twice in person. And the reason being because when I was coming up I interviewed with one of our top companies in Houston and that's the way that they did it. And I was wondering, I was like, well why are they keep doing this? Like what are they looking for? And then I realized and recognized, the woman told me at the end she says, because Tiffany, by the second interview a couple people will drop off.

**Tiffany Curry** ([24:48](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

But she said by the third one, if they're not really committed to being here long term, half of them are going to drop off. So you are actually stopping that at the door. You're building with people that are looking to build something as well. So that is a huge area for retention. You want to build with somebody that is looking to build something, not somebody that's just hopping around looking for the next best thing. I think that's so critical. So of course I am on active on social media with a lot of our agents. Pretty much most of them. I actually will like or love or comment on most of their stuff that are not real estate related. It's family related because I want them to know and understand I'm not just here for what you're selling, it's bigger than that. I'm actually paying attention to your personal life.

**Valerie Belardo** ([25:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

First of all, ditto to everything that both of you just said. I admire all of that and agree completely. I think for us it's going to go back to a little bit of our culture and some of the initiatives that we are working on that inspire that kind of love and devotion to the brand and to each other as a group. But I think more specifically, I think right now there's so much fear and I think one thing that we do really well because we are small, but we're, we like to say small but mighty because even as our size in the greater Portland market that we're in, we are consistently a top performing company. And we compete with companies two and three times our size. And I think what that means for our agents is that we feel a sense of safety and security in our business that we can weather this storm together.

**Valerie Belardo** ([26:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And then I think the other piece is again, because of our size, our culture, because of our broker owner structure and a sort of mutual, or I would say a shared entrepreneurial spirit, we have this very strong sense that we talk about a lot at Waypoint, which is that, I'm going to borrow a word from my partner Allie. She says it all the time and it's the perfect word, is we're nimble. And so in times of market shift, in times of uncertainty, there's a sense of empowerment that pervades our office. That if we need to pivot, if we see an opportunity, if we see a challenge in the marketplace, if something that we are not doing or if something we are doing needs to shift, we have the expertise and we are poised to turn the ship quickly, we can go from a conversation at a conference table to idea generation to implementation with a simple vote. And it can, it can happen fast. And that gives us a shared sense of we're all going to be okay no matter what the market throws at us.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([27:36](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

How do you encourage open communication and what mechanisms or channels are in place for agents to provide feedback or suggestions for improvement within the company? Valerie?

**Valerie Belardo** ([27:49](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well I have a no judgment policy, so, and that's hard to do. But in my office, my door's always open. When you come in, we're not going to judge what, what the situation is. We need to fix our problem, whatever it is. Tomorrow we're going to discuss what's a better way that we might have been able to handle that. But when I first started in the business, how I learned was through my mistakes. So, they're going to make the same mistakes that I do and hopefully each time we can grow and learn from those mistakes. So agents know that they can call me on anything. Sometimes I say that and I'm thinking, geez, did I really say that? Because they're calling me on everything, right? But you know what I feel, I feel so great when somebody calls me and asks me a question. I have an agent in my office, she's been in the business 40 years, she calls me and I think she's just, she, she knows the answer.

**Valerie Belardo** ([28:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

She wants to hear what I'm going to say. She already knows what the right thing to do is. And so one thing I always say to the agents, bottom line, if somebody did that to your family, your mom, how would you feel about it? They'll come back sometimes and say, forget it. I don't even need to ask you the question. So they already know the answers. They know what's the right thing to do. So they know that there's not going to be judgment and they can call me anytime. And I'd much rather you call me before the problem than after the problem because I can help you fix it. Now later on it might be a little bit more difficult to fix. And after we do that, after we have a conversation, always send them something and say, you know, how did you feel about our conversation yesterday? Did I do okay? Did could I have done something better? Did I make you feel comfortable? Did you learn something from it? Tell me how you felt. And they give me it back. They'll tell me how they felt. So sometimes it's hard to take when somebody tells you how they felt. But it helps me grow <laugh>

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([29:36](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Tiffany.

**Tiffany Curry** ([29:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well we have, at our, our meeting at the end of every month we have our agent suggestion session at well portion at the end of the meeting for them to openly and freely ask questions or give ideas. Becaue we have an agent council that meets pretty much every other month, but they have the freedom in front of the group. And I think it's important to let people know, because we have this one rule, there's no wrong question. This is a safe space. And we say that we remind people this is a safe space because sometimes people have questions and they think this sounds silly or this is dumb because I should know this and I don't want to be embarrassed asking this. And we believe in team and we, we preach that it's on our wall together everyone achieves more. And so when you bring people together and they feel like they have input in what's going on, um, not just in their personal business but in the company, it gives them a sense of ownership. It gives them a sense of belonging.

**Nova Tower** ([30:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I think, um, we handle this one similar because for us. It's also a monthly meeting and it's also an invitation. And for us, everyone is invited to add to the agenda. So we have an agenda with us for every meeting and everybody gets a chance to add to that agenda if there's something that they want to talk about or discuss. And I think one thing that we, it's just so core to us is that everything that is on that agenda gets respect and it gets time and it gets consideration. And you'll hear a lot of language at our group meetings where we say things like, I'm not really so sure about that, but here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to look into it, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that. Let's consider it. Let's talk to so-and-So, so even if there is, you know, a sense of, I'm not sure, I'm not all in on that.

**Valerie Belardo** ([31:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I want to consider it. There is respectful conversation, discussion and consideration of everything. And so I think what we feel, and I know I feel is I always feel heard. I always feel that people are listening to it and they're going to weigh in. And because of that I also have an immense trust that if someone is going to present a counter to an idea that I'm offering up, that there's real thoughtful reasoning behind it. And I might actually learn something by listening to their reasoning and to gather. We may come up with a better alternative. And that is the culture of what happens around our conference table.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([31:57](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Valerie, how are you recognizing the successes of your agents?

**Valerie Belardo** ([32:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well we do it a couple ways. Of course we do it on social media, but I also, I'm definitely a handwritten note card to people and I also like to include the family in it. So if I had an agent that had a really big transaction, maybe their biggest transaction they ever had, or they did a few transactions that month higher than they ever did, I like to send something to their house, to their partner and say, Hey, you know what, Mary did a fantastic job. Why don't you take her out to dinner with a gift card, take her out to dinner, send somebody a bottle of wine, send them flowers. I also really like to send pizza to the agents in the office. <laugh>. So, so what I do is I send them a gift card to their local pizza place and I do that as just a thank you for belonging to our company.

**Valerie Belardo** ([32:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you so much for being with us. Enjoy a pizza on me. And you know it, it's $20 gift card to a pizza place. I can tell you it goes a long way. Usually the partner calls me and says, Hey Val, thanks a lot, I really appreciate that. I didn't have to cook tonight. So I want to recognize them that way. A little bit different than just awards for selling. So thanks for being with my office. So today I had anniversaries for agents that are in my office. They were on social media with it. I sent him a text this morning and a quick phone call with a video saying thanks for being with my company. I appreciate you. Thanks.

**Tiffany Curry** ([33:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well, a couple of things. So we do have the normal recognition that we have, but we have two pieces that I love most because at one point we kind of got the stigma that we only do certain types of real estate and we do everything and we want to do everything, especially in this climate. So we have an award that's called the Community Champion of the month. And that's for the person that has done the lowest sale. That is because we, our, and our goal is to provide home ownership to everyone, not just certain price ranges. And so we wanted to incentivize the agents to go out there even though we know it's not a lot of money, but we want them to actually be doing this. It it's our total soul remember? So we want to make home ownership possible for everyone. And people kind of got the idea, oh you guys only do luxury, we do everything.

**Tiffany Curry** ([34:14](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And so one of our brokers in our market, she used to say, from $20,000 to 20 million. And so that's something that we kind of ingrained in our people's heads. So if you go out and you sell something, um, for a lower amount, you do get the community champion award because you have given a family something that they would not have been able to obtain in any other light. And I think it sends a different message and a different energy with our culture because this is more than sales. Yes, there's going to be the person that's going to have the top amount of sales, but in addition to that, we want to also have something for a person that's making an impact. And it creates that environment where other people want to do that because they're like, I want that community champion award. I want to be that.

**Tiffany Curry** ([34:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And that gets so much more ironically response back from their clientele and from their sphere. Because they're more engaged. And what is that? Tell me a little bit more about that. So that is a big part of the recognition. Another part of the recognition, because of the shift in the market, we wanted to recognize people not just for top sales but also for top contracts that did not make it. There was a point during the summertime where we had a lot of people backing out of contracts, especially as the rates started to really shift. People would go into the, the contracts, but they would come out during the option period and then some of them would go through it, but because the rates went up, they may no longer qualify. But you have to think that the agents have done the job. They feel dejected because these deals, they're and let down like, oh, oh my God, I lost three deals this month, you know, but I, I've been out here, I've done the work, da da da. We recognize that because at the end of the day, that is still work.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([36:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I always tell our agents that agency does not equal compensation. We've all had that opportunity. We dotted every I, we crossed every t we were phenomenal. But if that deal does not close, we will not be compensated and to be awarded Right. Also probably with how they handled it with grace, right? Overcoming the obstacle and then to letting other people know, especially in this market, it might happen to you also handle it with grace in the future.

**Valerie Belardo** ([36:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. I think I finally have a simple answer for you, Marki Lemons Ryhal <laugh>. Which is that I think for us it's just a matter of reaching out and communicating with each other and um, saying, you know, Hey, great job. And, and to your point, when something falls through, I think what we tend to do with each other in a, in a world that is constantly texting an email is if we're not in the office with each other for those celebratory moments or those hardship moments, we tend to pick up the phone and call each other, which I find quite charming and really love and appreciate when my phone rings and it's just somebody not asking me for something but just calling to say like, Hey, that was really awesome. Or Hey, how you doing? Like tough break. And um, and then the other thing I would say that we do, which I love and I know not everyone agrees on the virtue of a group text thread, but we have an all hands group text thread that we often communicate with each other and I know we can do that. Because again, our size, right? You can't necessarily do that if you've got a hundred brokers running around. But the mix of sort of inspiration and congratulations that happens in there, the volume of heart emojis that go out and the hilarious sometimes entire conversations that happen with gifts is really fun. And we celebrate each other a lot in that space, which feels just really great.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([37:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I'm going to put you on the spot. What is one thing you plan to implement based on attending this conference?

**Nova Tower** ([38:00](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

We were already going to do a buyer's agency class, so we are definitely going to do that

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([38:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Buyer agency course? Yep.

**Tiffany Curry** ([38:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

For us it's CIPS. So I just got my CIPS and I ventured out to International Night Out. I don't know how many of you were there, but that was awesome. So I came colorful in my green, but that is huge for you guys and I'm just going to give you that because I know that we're going through a different climate. We have started to promote global within our company, within our clients, within our agents, and on our social platforms. It has done wonders in just six weeks. We have somebody that is actually closing tomorrow, who is from Egypt. We posted his home and we posted a bird blurb about he and his family that he's coming from Egypt and that we handle that. One thing I love about CIPS is that it teaches you how to interact with different cultures and different people and different countries.

**Tiffany Curry** ([38:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And I think as a lot of us get tense, we are not recognizing the opportunity that we have in this market. A lot of countries have already done business different from what we have in terms of compensation and I'll just leave that at that. So it's not new, it's just different. That is a huge opportunity. We have another gentleman that is actually, he's building, so he won't be closing until the first of the year. However, he's coming to work from San Antonio to work for a global company in Houston. So that's the next thing that we have been promoting. And that's the big thing because once you start to do those things, you're bringing, you're attracting. And I don't like recruiting, I like attraction. You are attracting people, you're attracting clients to your brokerage. You're at attract attracting agents, the right agents. Can I say that to your brokerage? You're attracting people that want value, that want to be of value.

**Nova Tower** ([39:48](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I think for me it's maybe starting to think about how we as a company can engage more with NAR governance. I confess that I am a newbie to this conference. This is my first one.

**Valerie Belardo** ([40:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And thank you Marki for inviting me on this stage and being the reason for me to be here because one thing that has been eye-opening for me is to understand that I have been unaware of just how much NAR does on a daily basis that directly impacts my business, my community, homeowners across the country. I really didn't know. I mean, I vaguely knew, but I didn't really understand it. And I've been sitting in on some of the committee meetings and it has blown my mind to see realtors just like me. These are not, they're not politicians. They don't have specialized training. These are REALTORS® up there doing big, huge work that goes all the way to Congress lobbying for the interests of our community. And that's been really inspiring. So I want to take that back home and communicate that message to my team and let them know that there's a lot of opportunities here for us to be involved with.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([40:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I remember years ago there was a lady, her name is Dr. Rita Glass, and she actually invited me and Zeke Morris to be her partner at the time with Keller Williams Hyde Park in Chicago. And Rita was very big within the landmark forum. And even though she's no longer here, I look at how landmark, the law of attraction, the movie The Secret, have a huge impact on my life every single day. So if it's one thing that I plan to work with, with our agents, it's all about mindset. And I do believe in the law of attraction to the point that I don't even allow people in my sphere who I don't think live by the law of attraction because I believe that you attract what you put out. And I only want to put out greatness. What I will say is that we've had a great lineup today. I want to thank each of you for being here. I want to thank everyone for tuning in. I know that you have some great takeaways to me. We're leading with education and culture as we move forward as one, protecting the buying and selling public. Thank you.

**Marki Lemons Ryhal** ([42:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/nllNtU1iQvm8LCBOX3hsU0FJ1utW0pvwFnYYSsGAKJLNltwBfdo-dMbDqP-PAq3mLxFT6DgHkbvKvho4bIuQuVGEaLs?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you for joining us at Drive With NAR, The REALTOR® to REALTOR® series. Tune in every month to magazine.realtor/drive or subscribe wherever you listen to your podcast. Find more tips to boost your business at magazine.realtor.