

GUTS  
PASSION  
DRIVE  
LEADERSHIP  
HEART

ARE YOU

MAX

ENOUGH?

Four newcomers to the RE/MAX network show they're not interested in a safe, underwhelming career path where they can hang a license and close virtually no sales. They want something more.

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BY SHARA RUTBERG, DEBORAH BALL KEARNS AND AMANDA DERENGOWSKI

**"ARE YOU MAX ENOUGH?"**

Every RE/MAX Sales Associate has answered yes to that question at some point, even if it wasn't posed in those exact words.

After all, you don't join RE/MAX unless you have a certain something within you - a fire in your belly, a desire to aim higher, a healthy dose of confidence and a willingness to do what it takes to excel.

Boiled down, it's a mixture of guts, passion, drive, leadership and heart. And when that combination is coupled with the competitive advantages of RE/MAX, amazing things happen, benefiting everyone involved.

So whether you came to RE/MAX with a wealth of experience or possessed the confidence to join earlier in your career, chances are good that you brought these elements with you. Chances are also good that they've deepened ever since; that's what happens when you're part of a culture that values achievement and performance.

In the stories that follow, you'll meet four RE/MAX Associates who joined the network within the past two years. They each had their reasons for making the move, but they're where they are today because they knew - as did the Broker/Owners who brought them on board - they were clearly MAX Enough.

SALES ASSOCIATE  
SARAH LEIB WITH  
BROKER/OWNER  
SHAMI SANDHU



**SARAH LEIB**  
RE/MAX RIVER CITY  
EDMONTON, ALBERTA

## This hard worker finds a natural fit

**S**trolling through Edmonton's 14th annual Cornfest with her niece and nephew, Sarah Leib was even more excited about the RE/MAX sponsorship tents than she was about the wafting aroma of roasting corn. And that's saying a lot, because the fresh, local corn smells very enticing.

"I just love being out in the community and seeing the brand," says Leib, a onetime receptionist at RE/MAX River City who in 2011 rejoined the office as a Sales Associate. "When I decided to become an agent, RE/MAX was the natural fit; I didn't seriously consider another brand. Why would I?"

She's a new Sales Associate, but she brought more than a decade of big-picture experience and insight with her. She and her developer husband built an investment portfolio of a dozen single-family homes and an apartment building they manage themselves. Right from the start, she felt comfortable at her office.

"I've stayed in touch with many of the agents here, and even worked with some to purchase my own properties, so I know what sort of people they are," Leib says. "I love to meet with veteran agents for coffee or lunch to talk about new strategies and ways of running my business. The

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One of her valued resources – and biggest fans – is Broker/Owner Shami Sandhu.

"I'm amazed at the amount of hard work Sarah puts in," says Sandhu, who received a Broker/Owner of the Year award at the 2012 RE/MAX R4 last March. "She really goes above and beyond for her clients. She's there wherever and whenever they need her. She's passionate about helping people."

Her passion extends beyond home sales. She's highly active in the community, in efforts like the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation. The visibility and interaction help her create a professional reputation.

"I enjoy being a real estate resource for people – whether they're my clients or not," Leib says. "I really can't imagine running my business anywhere else but RE/MAX."



## She helps clients see possibilities

**S**ierra Cannon, who joined RE/MAX and began her real estate career less than a year ago, has already tied her business to a cause she cares about deeply.

Inspired by a close family friend who's a breast cancer survivor, Cannon sets regular fundraising goals through the Home for the Cure program and makes a donation after every closing. The pink-ribbon logo appears on all of her marketing materials.

"Right from the start, I wanted to make it clear that it's not all about me," Cannon says. "Buying and selling is an emotional process, and I use my position of trust to help clients see all the possibilities open to them."

Cannon's approach has led to a strong start; she's closed seven transaction sides so far this year and has several more pending. The former schoolteacher came to real estate after seeing the immediate success of her husband, Blake, who joined the brokerage in March 2011.

Cannon knew the RE/MAX model is designed more for experienced agents than newcomers, but she had great confidence in herself and "didn't want to waste time" somewhere else.

"I wanted to go with a brand that has a strong reputation," she says. "With RE/MAX, I feel like I'm wearing a superhero cape."

Since day one, Cannon has latched on to all the competitive advantages she can, learning a lot from her mentor, Office Manager Tena Taylor.

"Sierra is like a sponge when you're talking to her," Taylor says. "She takes it all in and then runs with it."

Cannon's grit and dedication – whether it's coming up with creative solutions to pricing issues or simply praying for her clients when they ask her to – are essential to her success.

"So much of the business is based on problem solving; no transaction is going to be 100 percent easy," Cannon says. "That's fine with me, because I never take no for an answer."



**JESSICA BONANNO**

RE/MAX MASTERS  
SOUTHLAKE, TEXAS

## Creative pro pushes toward her goals

**J**essica Bonanno rented a storage POD for nearly two weeks to assist sellers involved in a transaction that was going sideways. The telling part is that they weren't even her clients.

On a deal a long time in the making, Bonanno and her first-time homebuyers found themselves with their hands tied as the sellers awaited clarification on a financing issue that was preventing them from moving into their next home. Bonanno's clients were hoping to close and move in immediately, but the sellers began to balk. Bonanno thought through several scenarios and the end result was renting the POD. Her clients



SIERRA AND  
BLAKE CANNON

**SIERRA CANNON**

RE/MAX LEGACY REALTY  
OXFORD, MISS.



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appreciated her creativity.

“That’s what I had to do to make it happen,” she says. “Satisfied clients become referrals and sources of new business. I feel good about the level of service I provide, knowing I’m helping my clients enter a new chapter in their lives.”

Bonanno’s sales reflect her efforts. She joined RE/MAX in January, and by September had closed more than \$4 million in sales volume. She earned her broker’s license and the NAR Short Sales and Foreclosure Resource (SFR) designation, which has been a critical tool for her.

Bonanno has what it takes to craft a successful career, says RE/MAX Masters Broker/Owner Kristina Hayes.

“Jessica’s very driven,” Hayes says. “She’s extremely professional and has already developed an excellent reputation for handling business and people. She’s an entrepreneur who runs her business like a business.”

Bonanno, who left Prudential to join the network, is glad to be at RE/MAX.

“Being a RE/MAX agent tells people that I’m all-in on real estate; that I’ve made this my career, with long-term goals and expectations,” she says.

The atmosphere at RE/MAX Masters helps too.

“Working alongside top producers motivates me to keep climbing,” she says. “It pushes me closer to my goals.”

## He’s using the tools and getting results

**A**fter just a few months in the business, Jeff Minner found himself in front of a room full of students at the Idaho Real Estate School, talking about his quick success. Broker/Owner Darrin Jaszowski had asked Minner to speak to the aspiring agents, knowing that his passion for the industry would inspire them. It was a great call.

“Jeff has guts for sure; he’s not afraid to go all out,” Jaszowski says. “He’s really good at connecting with people.”

Minner, who joined RE/MAX West in July after a career in social work, had six pending deals and two due to close the day he was interviewed for ABOVE. The social skills he brought to his new career came in handy during one particularly tough transaction, when he had to counsel two first-time buyers – a young husband and wife – to put in a higher bid on their dream home after someone else had topped their first offer.

“I could see from the wife’s expression that she was frustrated and upset,” Minner says. “I asked her what was wrong, and the tears started flowing; she was anxious and stressed because she didn’t quite understand why they had to raise their offer. I diffused the situation and explained why.”



**JEFF MINNER**

RE/MAX WEST  
BOISE, IDAHO



The offer was accepted and the listing is in escrow – all because Minner addressed his clients’ fears head-on. It was another good day in a long string of them.

“I’m 37, and I feel like I’ve found my niche in life,” he says. “I have a great Broker/Owner, a great brand

and a great training system behind me – all working together.”

Minner immersed himself in Buffini & Company’s Peak Producers program right out of the gate. He also dove into elements like the RE/MAX Design Center and LeadStreet – he’s currently working on five LeadStreet leads. He’s extremely happy to be where he is.

“I enjoy the entrepreneurial aspect

“I enjoy the entrepreneurial aspect of RE/MAX, because my success is up to me and I’m doing everything I can to make it happen.”

—JEFF MINNER

of RE/MAX, because my success is up to me and I’m doing everything I can to make it happen,” Minner says. “Wherever I go, I wear my RE/MAX lapel pin and it starts some great conversations. When that happens, I know I’m meant to do this.”