



TSS Realty Group Brings Forth Powerful Combination of Talent and Skill

by Nick Caruso

In Southport, Conn., one group of agents is looking to redefine what it means to truly serve customers in real estate. Backed by the world-renowned referral network of Sotheby's International Realty, team members Chris Titus, Carolyn Sullivan and Cliff Smith are revitalizing their services out of their William Pitt Sotheby's office by launching their brand-new team, TSS Realty Group. After a few recent forays working together, the trio's synergy was one that could not be ignored, bringing forth a powerful combination of each member's unique talents and skillsets. Here, Titus, Sullivan and Smith discuss their goals in forming this exciting new venture and what will differentiate their team from others in the southern Connecticut marketplace.

How many years have you been in real estate and how did you end up at William Pitt Sotheby's in Southport, Conn.?

Carolyn Sullivan: I raised my family while living in Southport for 17 years. I had always known of William Pitt Sotheby's reputation of excellence, and with my passion for real estate, the choice to join Sotheby's was an easy one. No other local agency can market a property like Sotheby's with its global referral network of more than 760 offices in 60 countries. I am confident that TSS Realty Group will be one of the most successful real estate teams in Connecticut, offering white-glove customer service unlike any other.

Cliff Smith: As a real estate investor, I've always had a passion and interest in the business of real estate. I've also always had a desire to help others in my community with one of the largest transactions they'll encounter in their lifetime—selling and/or buying a home. When it came time to choose the brokerage firm with which I'd work, I naturally wanted a firm that would not only share my same passion for helping others, but a company that had the track record, resources and reputation that are crucial in representing clients. There is no other firm in the world that can market one's home like Sotheby's.

Chris Titus: After working at another local agency for eight years in Westport, Conn., I was ready to make the move to a company that I felt would better serve my clients' needs as well as my own. The only clear choice for me was William Pitt Sotheby's. The affiliation with the Sotheby's brand is what really attracted me, as it allows me to market my listings in a way no other real estate company can. Their high standards and level of excellence in marketing their properties is what sets them apart from all others. One huge example of this is the brand new Sotheby's International Realty website (www.sir.com), as well as the newly launched William Pitt Sotheby's website (www.williampitt.com). Both utilize amazing widescreen, HD video and have the most technologically advanced tools for both buyers and sellers. The company continues to stay far ahead of the competition by constantly introducing new and cutting-edge resources for their agents to better serve their clients.

What towns does your company serve?

Titus: William Pitt Sotheby's is the largest Sotheby's franchise in the world. Locally, our group covers the majority of lower Fairfield County, Conn., with a focus in Fairfield, Southport, Westport, Norwalk, Weston, Easton and Wilton. Globally, our affiliation with Sotheby's International Realty enables us to effectively assist our clients almost anywhere in the world with 760 offices in 60 countries, making us the only true global real estate firm.

How would you describe your firm's positioning in the marketplace? What sets you apart from the competition?

Titus: Our marketing spans the globe when it comes to getting exposure for the properties we represent. Our strategic alliances with The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times—and all of our other marketing partnerships—are designed to provide our properties with the greatest local and international exposure available by any real estate brand.

How did your new team join together?

Smith: Each of us were having our own individual successes in the real estate business, and after working on a few transactions together, the synergy and need to join forces became apparent. It was not only how well we bonded on a professional level that brought us to this decision; it was also how bringing our individual talents together would provide our clients with a more comprehensive package of strength and capabilities.

What were your goals in forming a new team?

Titus: We knew from the start that to embark on this venture, we had to be confident that we could provide something clients wanted, needed and could not find in another group. Our goal is to combine the success of our individual capabilities into success for our clients, whether they're buying or selling a home, or simply need guidance in their endeavors.

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- Cliff Smith
Team Member, TSS Realty Group

How does your team serve the changing needs of today's buyers and sellers?

Sullivan: One aspect that stands out is the composition of our group. We vary in age, experience and gender and this offers clients a wide range of expertise. Since all buyers and sellers have different needs and goals, our unique combination of personal and professional talents provides clients with a new perspective on how REALTORS® can work to better serve their needs.

What trends are you currently seeing in your market?

Smith: After Hurricane Sandy, we experienced a significant increase in new construction, specifically in the beach area where most of the damage occurred. With

110 active listings and 27 of them being new construction, the market continues to be strong. Another recent trend is the desire to live closer to town, which is making the university and beach areas very attractive. We're also seeing large numbers of buyers moving to our area from NYC to take advantage of our top-rated schools, wonderful beach communities and genuine New England beauty.

What are the greatest challenges ahead of you for the remainder of the year?

Sullivan: We believe TSS Realty Group has something very unique and special to offer our current and future clients. One of the challenges for the remainder of the year will be procuring name and brand recognition throughout Fairfield County and the world.

How does your team market itself?

Titus: We will be utilizing numerous platforms to market our group and the services we provide. Ninety-two percent of buyers start their home search online, while sellers also use the Internet to research agents and their companies. That's why it's paramount that we focus on our online presence. We recently launched our own TSS Realty Group website, which will provide information on towns in our area, property searches and valuable real

estate articles, as well as providing visitors the ability to sign up to receive current market conditions and statistics.

How do you incorporate social media into your marketing plan?

Sullivan: In this day and age, social media is crucial to the marketing strategy of any business. TSS Realty Group plans to use as many social media platforms as possible, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest. Social media is a great way to get one's name out to the public as well as share ideas, tips and new trends within the community.

What's in store for your team's future?

Smith: We have great confidence in our team's future and the potential to expand and grow over time. First and foremost, we would like to establish a strong base and make sure we have all the tools in place in order to ensure success. It will be a marathon, not a sprint. Whether it's real estate groups or business start-ups, the most important key to longevity is making sure you have a strong foundation first. Since we already have that in place, the sky's the limit. **RE**

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