

“The hottest trend is looking for a ‘Surban Living’ lifestyle that blends qualities of suburban and city living”

Q: Describe your company.

A: My wife Dianne and I started RealStar Realty in 2001 because we thought that there was a real need for a full service real estate brokerage that really had a client-centered philosophy. By keeping our clients’ needs front and center, marketing extensively, and having a 3.9 percent seller commission we have found true success.

Q: Do you plan to hire staff or make significant capital investments in your company in the next year?

A: We are always looking for ways to better serve our clients by expanding and developing our company. Our service areas have grown and we are constantly investing in the newest marketing tools to build better connections between our agents and clients. In fact, we recently launched individual websites for our agents, which have given them a great new platform to promote their business and provide support to their clients. We also recently invested in new remote tools, so that our agents can get clients the information they need, no matter where they are and allow them to spend less time in the office and more time with clients.

Q: What will your company’s main challenges be in the next year?

A: There is an ever-growing number of internet based brokerages with a business model of ‘List & Leave.’ The flat-fee seems like a convenient option for sellers, but these companies often leave people high and dry after they put the listing in MLS and have no motivation to market or sell the home.

Our job is to remind people of the value of a professional realtor’s customer service — we schedule showings, handle marketing and provide feedback and analysis.

Q: From a business outlook, whom do you look up to?

A: Southwest Airlines because they always rank at the top of customer service by offering the most cost effective and enjoyable way of getting from point A to point B.

Consumers recognize the value — without sacrificing service.



John Wilt

President/Owner/CEO

RealStar Realty Inc.

209 W. Roosevelt Road, Wheaton

Industry: Residential Real Estate

Number of employees: 10

Website: www.realstar.com

Age: 56

Family information: Married 29 years to Dianne Wilt, 2 daughters Christine and Megan

Hometown: Wheaton, IL

Q: If you had one tip to give to a rookie CEO, what would it be?

A: I think every business has to come back to good customer service. Whether you are a large corporation or locally owned business people expect good customer service the first time — and every time after that. It is far cheaper to keep a customer than to go get a new one.

Q: What’s the hottest trend in the industry?

A: Some might say drones but only a small number of homes have large enough yards for that. The hottest trend among clients is looking for a ‘Surban Living’ lifestyle that blends the best qualities of suburban and city living. These communities combine a variety of housing types such as single family, townhouses, condos and even rental units all within a community or large neighborhood that includes playgrounds, parks, walking trails, picnic area or other things that encourage residents to get out and interact. ...

I expect that we’ll see newer communities designed this way and some older communities retrofitted to follow this trend. Overall, the industry is trending toward becoming more technology-reliant from drones being used to photograph and inspect homes to photographers using virtual staging to add furniture in vacant homes.

This is a very technologically-driven industry that puts tons of information at the fingertips of buyers and sellers and it will only become more tech-driven in the future.

Q: What was your first paying job?

A: Delivering newspapers at 6 a.m. My Grandmother would get up and help me put rubber bands around them and we would chat about everything. A memory I still cherish.

Q: What is one interesting fact about you or your company that most people may not know?

A: Our agents have more infield training and mentoring than most agencies. As a smaller company, much of our training is done one-on-one versus in a large classroom setting.

We pair our newest agents with a top producer so they are given the time and space to ask questions and grow as a real estate professional under

the guidance of an expert. I believe strongly in our training and think the success of our agents is a testament to this unique approach in training.

Q: What do you like to do in your free time?

A: I am the managing broker/owner so free time is limited. That being said, I like to fish and golf some too. Mostly, I like to be with friends and family no matter what they are doing. Otherwise, I volunteer. I believe, time is the most important thing you can give anyone. Helping people that need it and appreciate it really puts everything in perspective.

Q: What book is on your nightstand?

A: How about magazines? Discover Magazine and Family Handyman.

Q: If you were not doing this job, what would you be doing?

A: Teaching science or building furniture. Teaching someone something or constructing a table gives you instant payback for your effort.

The hard part of real estate is even though I work hard today I don’t often see the results for several months and there are a lot of obstacles in real estate transactions that are inherently out of my control.

Q: If you could put your company name on a sports venue, which one would you choose?

A: If I didn’t say White Sox my daughter would be mad, so I said it — but Blackhawks all the way.

Q: What is one funny thing that has happened to you in your career?

A: I sold a home to a client who bought the home of the buyer of her house. Basically, with some exchange of papers they switched houses.

Q: Two people to follow on Twitter and why.

A: Neil deGrasse Tyson because he is one of the smartest, most analytical, yet open-minded people in the world. And Richard Rawlings of Gas Monkey Garage because he has gone from a 2 person shop to a multimillion dollar empire and has fun doing it.

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