

The Magic Bullet

If you drive by a new home listed in the Temecula, California area by ERA Donahoe Realty and you text the code on the sign to get more information on the property, expect a phone call, a text *and* an email – all within a few minutes – from the Donahoe’s real estate firm.

You’ll also instantly receive a virtual video tour

and photos of the home on your cell phone.

To take it even further -- if you click on one of the company’s listings from Donahoe Realty’s Facebook or Instagram page, again, expect a phone call, a text *and* an email.

Welcome to the wonderful new high-tech world of real estate, powered by ERA Real Estate, a leader in the world of franchise real estate re-



Gratten and Sarah Donahoe

Independent realtors around the world are affiliating with ERA because of its technology and digital tools, which have grown over the last year with the appointment of Simon Chen as the company’s new COO.

Real Estate and Technology

responsible for a staggering 27 percent of all home sales in the world. Moreover, its realtors have the highest production per person of any real estate brand in the world.

“ERA is a bright star in the real estate universe,” says Sarah Donahoe, broker/owner of ERA Donahoe Realty.

Which is why Sarah and Grattan Donahoe chose in 2014 to affiliate themselves with ERA over other real estate brands with a presence in California.

In fact, independent realtors all over the world are flocking to affiliate with ERA over other top brands. One reason is because of ERA’s emphasis on technology, innovation and data and analytics tools that help agents be more productive, learn insights about buyers and sellers and market properties in emerging ways. ERA, which has a history of innovation since its founding in the early 1970s, is investing in its next generation of technology prowess with the appointment of Simon Chen as the company’s new Chief Operating Officer, tasked with making the company an undisputed leader in the space.

How powerful is ERA’s technology and digital tools? The numbers speak for themselves. The Donahoe’s Gross Commissionable Income (GCI) increased five-fold since they affiliated with ERA, going from \$700,000 to \$3.3 million in three years, essentially doubling every year.

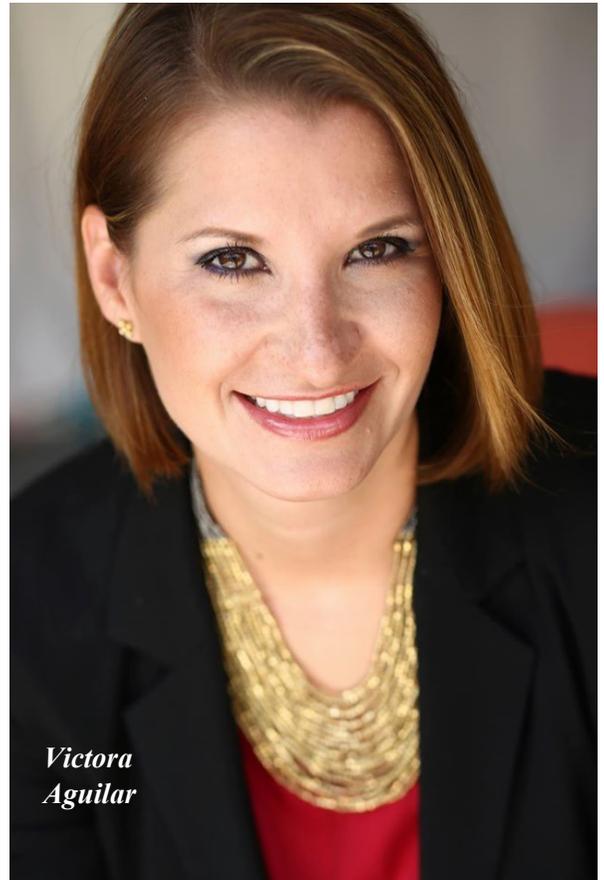
“We were attracted to affiliating with ERA because of how innovative it is,” Ms. Donahoe says. “Their beginnings are rooted in technology and innovation. They fit in perfectly with the way we were thinking and how it would ‘play’ in our market. The way the market was changing, affiliating with ERA was essential for us.”

“There comes a day as an independent broker where you hit a ceiling,” Sarah says. “We were really attracted to affiliating with ERA because of how innovative the brand is and how they helped us discover our own value proposition. As soon as we affiliated, we created the capacity necessary to grow and better serve our agents.”

After 10 years of being independent brokers in Temecula, the Donahoe’s realized that if they

wanted to compete in today’s market, they’d need more digital tools to offer agents. For independent brokers, investing in the tools ERA provides costs thousands of dollars.

“It actually could bankrupt you pretty quickly,” Grattan says.



*Victora
Aguilar*

“Each tool can be thousands and thousands of dollars and the cost of researching each one and figuring it out on your own was just a massive undertaking,” he adds. “In our case, ERA taught us everything.”

The arrival of Chen has turned an already innovative ERA into the industry’s model franchise, hyper-focused on growth, innovation and a culture of authenticity unique to the business world. Before joining ERA, Chen was COO at Realty One Group. He is also the founder of the real estate investment and technology consulting firm Century Pacific Group. Prior to that, he was Senior Director of Corporate Development and Strategy at Realtor.com.

How powerful is ERA's technology and digital tools? Well, the Donahoe's Gross Commissionable Income (GCI) increased five-fold since becoming affiliated with ERA, going from \$700,000 to \$3.3 million – essentially doubling every year.

“Simon has a technology brain,” Grattan says. “If you can isolate him, which I’ve been fortunate enough to do, he’ll start talking to you about APIs and loops and integration – topics that the majority of realtors are not comfortable with broaching, to say the least. Technology wise, he is so far ahead of everyone in this industry that it has put ERA in an amazing position.”

Armed with their own paid digital programs, public social media tools like Facebook and the technology tools they gained through affiliation with ERA – like the Zap platform that connected all ERA websites under an integrated CRM to glean vital data and analytics on visitors and their real estate needs – the Donahoes found the “magic bullet” to propel growth over the coming years.

In the “old” days, Grattan says, there wasn’t one medium to reach every single person you wanted to, but with the growth of Facebook and other tech platforms, agents and brokers can reach people exactly where they spend the majority of their time.

“ERA has really given us as close to a magic bullet as possible,” he says.

Victoria Aguilar, the CEO of the Beverly Hills, Calif. boutique real estate firm Nelson Shelton Real Estate ERA Powered, recognized the technological power behind ERA and decided to affiliate with the firm, too.

During some intensive internal meetings regarding the future of the industry, Aguilar and her mother Elsa, who founded the firm 25 years ago, took a hard look at the company and asked themselves questions like – where are we going to be in five to 10 years? Can we afford to invest in new software, productivity tools and lead generation capabilities that are becoming the norm? What value are we providing to agents, and are we meeting our own growth goals?

“It was a real eye opener of where we needed to be in order to get where we had to go,” Ms. Aguilar says. “But it turned out to be an easy decision.”

Affiliating with ERA has not only given Nelson Shelton the support it needed in terms of tools, it also allowed Victoria to take advantage of ERA’s succession programs, enabling her to transition into the CEO role.

Since affiliating, Nelson Shelton has also experienced a spike in productivity and sales, and credits its growing focus on technology for the success.

“The reality of real estate is that everyone is online, so we needed to be there to meet our clients where they are,” she says. “For us, ERA was a no brainer.”

Especially since ERA offered Nelson Shelton flexibility in affiliating and the freedom to retain their culture and branding.

“They said, ‘You have built this great iconic reputation in Beverly Hills, and we don’t want to take that away – we want that to be a strength of yours,’” Ms. Aguilar said. “And that’s exactly what has happened. We now have the global reach that we needed but we retained our local boutique feel.” — *By Rick Weinberg, California Business Journal*

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