

Weathering the Storm to Succeed in Real Estate

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By Lesley Geary

RISMEDIA, Dec. 18, 2007-To Martin Mayer, president and CEO of ERA Stirling Properties, real estate is all about long-term relationships. Overseeing 17 offices with over 200 agents, in today's market it is especially important to not let the deal get in the way of doing the right thing. Here, meet Mayer, and understand his philosophy in life, in real estate, and in success in a split market.

Martin Mayer
President & CEO
ERA Stirling Properties
Southern Louisiana and Southern Mississippi

Years in real estate: 21 **Career path:** "In 1986, this region was in the middle of the oil crisis [the field Mayer had been working in], so I thought it would be a good time to get into the real estate business. However, it was not what I envisioned. We were lucky to make payroll. Because we had been only in shopping centers, in order to survive, we were forced to find other sources of income-property management and residential real estate. Today, we are in very good shape because we are so diversified." **Number of offices:** 17 offices; 9 residential **Average sales price:** \$250,000 **Number of agents:** Approximately 200 **Average time on market:** 60 - 90 days


Describe your current market conditions. It's interesting because you are talking about two worlds: one affected by Hurricane Katrina and one that was not. We have offices in markets that were completely affected by the storm and are very uncertain. Then in the other markets in areas that were not flooded or damaged, you had people coming in droves, so there is a considerable amount of new construction. We are dealing with both sides of the coin.

In your opinion, what differentiates your brokerage from the others in the marketplace? We are the only company in this market that has diversified so there is brand recognition and a level of awareness for our firm that others may not enjoy.

How does being with ERA help you? The tools, the resources and the training that we have via ERA have been invaluable. We don't have to create it ourselves. Also, ERA's relocation arm-Cartus-has helped us. We were a big regional independent before we joined ERA in 2000 and technology was becoming all important to the business and so by joining ERA we automatically got all of their back-end systems and all of their marketing programs, so we didn't have to reinvent the wheel. ERA's Web sites, for instance, are really second to none. So for a regional company like ours, ERA brought a lot to the table that we couldn't have done on our own.

What is your philosophy for a successful life in real estate? Real estate is like anything else. It is all about long-term relationships so don't ever let the deal get in the way of doing the right thing. I am also a very firm believer that the company, as well as every individual in the company, should be involved in their community-and not just for business-but because in the end, it's all about being a good corporate citizen.

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