



broker/agent
of the month

SHARON COLONA

BY MICHELLE COX - PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON KLEIN OF AUGUST IMAGE GROUP

Sharon Colona believes that success is measured not by what you do, but by what you do for others. And by that standard, she is one successful woman.

To call Sharon an entrepreneur is a significant understatement. She founded St. Louis Realty in 2001, and she has established the company as a top agency, exclusively serving sellers in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Starting a company from scratch might seem intimidating, but to Sharon, it was old hat. When she was just 20 years old, she opened a nail salon in Crestwood. Four years later, she opened a second salon in Downtown St. Louis. Then she discovered that there were very few avenues for advertising her salon, so she started an advertising magazine called Downtown Dollars.

"I've always believed in the Nike slogan - just do it," Sharon says. "When I just dig in and get to work, I see results."

In 1999, she decided that she'd like a more traditional career, so she walked into Charter Communications and told them she'd be the perfect candidate to help them sell advertising.

One of her agents and a life-long friend, Roxann Taylor, laughs about the memory. "They weren't even hiring for that position, but Sharon left the meeting with a job," Roxann says. "That's just how she is."

After about a year in the "traditional" role, Sharon decided to follow her heart into real estate. "I'd always been interested in houses and seeing

their potential," she says. "So I decided to get my license and develop the niche market of working exclusively with listings." Two of her brothers, Jeff Colona and Shawn McAtee, joined her as agents.

Sharon also decided to do things a little differently when it comes to serving her clients. At St. Louis Realty, sellers only pay 5 percent commission. "We work twice as hard for our clients, and we do it for 2 percent less," she says. "Because we only serve sellers, we are the experts in our field. Everyone here works full-time, and we do everything we can to get a property sold."

Sharon says she opted for the discounted commission because it was the "right thing to do." "As interest rates went down and home prices went up, it only seemed fair to make an adjustment to the traditional commission rate," she says. "We literally save our clients thousands of dollars, and we still make a very good income. All we have to do is more transactions."

And clients really appreciate that particular aspect of working with her company, according to Sharon. In fact, it's that appreciation that drives her to work even harder for clients. "The most satisfying part of the job is when a client sincerely thanks you for selling their home and allowing them to enjoy more of the profits from the sale that they would've otherwise paid in commission," she says.

Of course, it took some time for the company to get the word out about their specialized service and discounted commission. Sharon says that she and all of her agents worked around the clock to get listings, and then they provided the kind of service that got people talking.