

TOP AGENT

MAGAZINE



S. Sherman



Courtney Smitheman

Located in tropical South Florida, the idyllic coastal town of Jupiter is no stranger to storms. Still, when the real estate market was buffeted by the winds of economic downturn in 2008, only the strongest and smartest came through unscathed. Courtney Smitheman and Crane Reed Properties, the boutique agency she launched in 2005, not only stayed afloat, but managed to thrive while other, larger agencies were either closing their doors or merging with other companies to survive.

“A lot of other firms were expanding at the same pace as the market. I believed the writing was on the wall and another crash was coming. It was simply impossible to sustain that kind of growth. We were fiscally conservative, so when

everything crashed and burned Crane Reed was in a good place,” says Courtney.

Coupling acute business acumen with a high level of attention to detail and customer service, Courtney’s business not only emerged relatively unscathed from that year, but has doubled its revenue every year since, and 2011 is on track to be her most successful yet. She and her team of seven agents emphasize both honesty and integrity as cornerstones of the company’s success. In addition, Crane Reed boasts solid business, negotiating and marketing skills in both residential sales and rentals, as well as commercial and investment properties. Explains Courtney, “Client satisfaction is the highest priority. Exceeding expectations, not just meeting them, is always our goal.”



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Courtney, a native of Hawaii who was raised in Southern New Jersey, found her way to a real estate career after majoring in biology in at Rutgers University and an initial stint in sales for pharmaceutical giant Merck. Says Courtney, “I always had a knack for sales, and I hit my stride selling pharmaceuticals. But it was very limiting. Corporate America has its advantages, but it also has its limits when it comes to sales, and I really wanted to do something where I could be more creative.”

Parlaying her sales expertise into a real estate career seemed almost predestined. “I was already spending my spare time attending open houses and looking at listings in the newspaper,” says Courtney. When her fiancé (now her husband),

suggested she try her hand at it, she decided to give it a go. “Based on my interests and work ethic, the transition came naturally to me.”

Courtney initially worked with another broker, where she learned about sales and also the ins-and-outs of running a brokerage firm. However, she knew from the start that her goal was to open a small, boutique firm of her own. “When I travel to destination towns, such as Carmel, Nantucket, the Hamptons, etc. I have always noticed one thing they all had in common; boutique real estate firms with a strong knowledge and presence in their area with agents that really know that specific area, inside and out.” Jupiter, which boasts as much charm and tropical-getaway appeal as the nearby Palm Beach, is



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"Jupiter isn't the glitz and glamour of Palm Beach or Miami, it's more down-to-earth, but there's still an appreciation for the finer things in life."



great, says Courtney, because "you can have the multi-million dollar home on the water, or the high-rise at the beach, but there are also many homes that are affordable and reasonable in the mid-three hundred thousand dollar range." Jupiter, which has been a vacation destination since the 1930's, recently achieved a level of notoriety when golfer Tiger Woods purchased a home on nearby Jupiter Island. In addition to Jupiter, Crane Reed Properties also services several other communities in the nearby Palm Beaches and Treasure Coast.

Courtney, who lives in Jupiter with her husband David Mezzapelle and two children of the four-

legged variety, says "Jupiter isn't the glitz and glamour of Palm Beach or Miami, it's more down-to-earth, but there's still an appreciation for the finer things in life." Dedicated to providing exceptional service for all clients in varying situations, and doing so with finesse, that description could also apply to Crane Reed Properties itself.