

Women in Real Estate: Highlighting Advice From Powerful Leadership

By Liz Dominguez



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Although the gender gap for real estate leadership roles remains relatively wide, there are numerous individuals making significant progress toward bridging that gap. Here, three women leaders of the residential real estate industry share their strategies for success, and insights on how women seeking to advance their business can reach new heights.

Maile Aguila
Senior Vice President
Swire Properties Inc.



Aguila is the senior vice president of Residential Sales for Swire Properties, overseeing the Reach and Rise residential towers and other luxury condos in Miami's \$1.05 billion landmark Brickell City Centre. She began her career in the residential real estate realm holding multiple senior management positions with some of the leading real estate sales and development companies in the Southeast, including The Sunshine Group and Ben Franklin Properties.

Arlinda Dine
Executive Vice President of Marketing
Modern Spaces



As executive vice president of Marketing for Modern Spaces, Dine oversees dozens of new buildings throughout all stages of development, starting with conception all the way through financials, sales, and beyond. While managing several building projects out of the main office of MNS, a brokerage (previously The Developers Group), Dine met Eric Benaim in 2012 and collaborated with him to build Modern Spaces' most recent initiative, New Development.

Shama Barot
Chief Strategist
Creative Choice Group



Barot works with the design and engineering teams, as well as the creative studios and marketing and strategy teams, at Creative Choice Group, to ensure the company stays true to its core. As chief strategist, Barot helps create dynamic spaces that connect people to a lifestyle of health and well-being at Amrit Ocean, an oceanfront condominium in Florida.

What is the significance of women holding a leadership role in residential real estate?

Maile Aguila: I believe it is important as a woman leader to educate and empower the next generation. I mentor younger women and take part in community initiatives, organizations and panels. I enjoy teaching younger women to be true to themselves, take risks, be fearless and trust that sixth sense that allows us to be intuitive and connect with others.

Arlinda Dine: A big part of my job is the pre-planning for thousands of new residential development residences. A vast number of end users are women, so having women in key decision-making roles to weigh in on the design, layout, conception and even marketing strategy makes sense from a business perspective.

Shama Barot: I am extremely grateful to have been provided the opportunities to excel as a woman in an industry in which most executive-level and leadership positions are held by men...When women are leaders, they create a roadmap for other women behind them. I think it's important to uplift and celebrate other women, especially in a male-dominated industry.

What motivates you to grow your business and keep striving for those next-level accomplishments?

SB: By creating personalized wellness journeys that empower people to cultivate healthy habits and ultimately enhance their peace and happiness, we are enabling them to live their best lives. Waking up every day knowing that what we are creating goes beyond real estate is my biggest motivator to grow Amrit and keep striving for those next-level accomplishments.

MA: Swire is a gentle giant that builds projects to thrive for years to come—and to be able to learn and work alongside these visionaries is a lifetime achievement and continues to motivate me every day.

AD: I'm ambitious by nature and once I have accomplished something, I'm already seeking the next opportunity for growth. Since joining Modern Spaces in 2012, I've strived to diversify our projects and push the company to continue evolving by expanding to new markets.

What advice can you give to other women looking to advance into leadership roles within the residential real estate industry?

AD: Women need to be strong to be in this industry. They don't need to compromise kindness or their personality to do that. There is room to apply your individuality and still be successful. Another tip is to try and find a healthy work environment that supports you and your goals.

MA: I have learned that the most important lesson is to never lose sight of who you are and always be true to yourself—whether it's your faith in God, your core beliefs, your spirit or your moral center. Once you achieve this mindset, you'll value your knowledge and hard work, and, through that, anything is possible.

SB:

- Grit** – I think the biggest lesson I've found true, regardless of industry or scenario, is "if at first you don't succeed, dust yourself off and try again." Even if they underestimate you initially, your hard work, strong technical skills and intelligence will get you through. Study, keep improving your craft and always give it more than your all.
- Mentorship** – Align with people who can help you grow. While women have been inspirational in my journey, I have been fortunate enough to also have male mentors that have helped me navigate the world. They gave me the confidence to believe that a woman can do it as well, if not better than, a man.
- Connections** – Relationships make the difference. It's so important to intimately understand both your customer and team, their needs and what they care about. Where these priorities intersect, there is opportunity to accomplish great things.