

Medium.com Features Bonnie Heatzig as one of the Most Prominent Women Leaders in Real Estate



[Jason Hartman](#) | [Sep 16](#) · 11 min read



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in the real estate industry, particularly at the upper echelon of management. I stand on the shoulders of strong, successful women, like Barbara Corcoran, who have broken gender barriers and paved the way for women like me to forge a successful path in real estate. With that said, there is more work to be done and this effort is most effectively led by Women Leaders of Real Estate and other leadership networks where women show by example that there is no place for biases that stymie women's advancement.

AS *a part of my series about strong women leaders of the Real Estate industry, I had the pleasure of interviewing **Bonnie Heatzig**.*

***Bonnie Heatzig** of The Luxury Real Estate Authority, has sold more than \$400 million in real estate and counting since becoming a realtor in 2004. She is a member of Florida Association of Realtors and Realtors of the Palm Beaches. She was recognized as the Top 1/2 of 1% of all realtors in Florida based on sales volume by Real Trends/Wall Street Journal in 2020. Bonnie's unique skill set and nuanced experience representing clients, including A-list actors, entrepreneurs, business managers, and Fortune 100 executives, gives her the professional edge when working with ultra-high net worth clients from around the world. Bonnie received her bachelors degree in economics from Boston College and Juris Doctor degree from University of Connecticut Law School. She is a member of*

the Bar Associations in Florida, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Upon graduating from law school, she practiced with one of New England's largest law firms, Robinson & Cole. After transferring to Miami, Bonnie became an attorney for South Florida Water Management District. She then served as General Counsel for one of the nation's leading advertising agencies, Directional Advantage Holdings, LLC (d/b/a Smartlite), doing business in 48 states. She continues to advise them as an "Of Counsel" attorney.

Thank you for doing this with us! Can you tell us the "backstory" about what brought you to the Real Estate industry?

I was working full-time practicing law when my husband and I decided that we should consider selling our own home. After interviewing several top agents, I didn't feel that they shared my passion for my house and that, to me, was such a critical piece of a salesperson's job. If my agent didn't love my property, how could they sell it for top dollar? I also researched properties where we could move once we sold our then-current home. I found the exercise challenging as I delved deep into searching for deals that beat the market. At the dinner table a few weeks later, I said, "Game on!" Real estate was my match! Not long after that Sunday night dinner, I followed my dream and pursued a career selling real estate where I knew I could make a value added contribution and make my mark!

Can you share with our readers the most interesting or amusing story that occurred to you in your career so far? Can you share the lesson or take away you took out of that story?

With only six months experience selling real estate under my belt, I learned first-hand Yogi Berra's famous idiom, "It ain't over till

it's over.” Weeks earlier, I was overjoyed to earn the listing of a \$2 million dollar waterfront home. I was even more elated when buyers visiting from Austria saw my advertisement for this home in the local paper and we wrote a contract on the house! It all seemed so easy until the final walkthrough. As I greeted the buyers at their soon-to-be new home on that stormy morning before the Closing, I noticed a stream of water leaking from the 33 ft ceiling behind them! I couldn't believe my eyes and before I could speak, another leak was sprung and large droplets of water were bouncing off the top of my head and streaming down the side of my face! We all looked up and saw roof leaks were all over! Fortunately, we were able to hold money in escrow for the roof repairs and still close on time, but not without some last minute hard work and perseverance to keep the deal together! The take-away: never let your guard down and when the chips fall, stand up for your deal, your values, and stay focused and composed!

Are you working on any exciting new projects now? How do you think that will help people?

One exciting project I am working on is a business plan to foster powerful referral networks with high-end realtors in New York City, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other high-net worth metropolitan areas. Prospective buyers need help finding a trustworthy, vetted resource when looking to relocate to our area. The high-end clientele are looking for a realtor who is educated, savvy, and knowledgeable of the luxury marketplace. These prospects need a “go-to” realtor and, for that reason, I am ramping up my alliances so that I am their realtor of choice — The Luxury Real Estate Authority — that will give them the edge in the highly competitive world of luxury real estate.

South Florida, now more than ever, is a bright spot on the national housing market as the COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to spend more time at home. We are seeing a strong uptick of relos looking for an easier lifestyle that includes warmer weather,

beaches nearby, and tax incentives. With more money in their pocket and an ability to live a sunny easy-going lifestyle, South Florida is a compelling option!

What do you think makes your company stand out? Can you share a story?

My luxury real estate practice runs an inch-wide and a mile deep. This highly specialized niche fosters an extremely demanding clientele with high expectations of performance and results at every turn. The competition is fierce, leaving no margin for forgiveness. I stand out as The Luxury Real Estate Authority among my peers because I run the luxury brand through every marketing piece, through every communication, and I present myself to my clients as the expert that I am who is the only one who can get them the property they want at the price they want to pay. I am fortunate to have a nephew who is a pilot and more than once, I have hired him to fly my clients and me around my market area to show them aerial views of the best of our oceanfront, proximities to the Inlet from different waterfront neighborhoods, the varying canal widths of different streets even within a single neighborhood — all while I am explaining corresponding home values and comparisons during the entire trip. Thinking outside the marketing box allows me to demonstrate my stand-out knowledge base and marketing tools to discerning clientele. This type of white glove treatment has proven to be my gateway to loyalty and referrals!

None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?

Without a doubt, I could never have achieved my success without the support and encouragement of my husband of 23 years, Eric. Those of us in real estate know that our profession is a 24/7

commitment and that means sacrificing time with your family. With the blanket support of my husband and our three children, I have been able to pursue the most rewarding (and humbling) career I ever could have imagined for myself. Working on the waterfront, I would often see my family boating on weekends in Lake Boca from the balconies of high end condos I was showing to clients. It is hard not to feel left out on those weekend outings, but we manage to plan exciting and memorable family vacations to make up for lost weekend time together!

Ok. Thank you for all that. Let's now jump to the main core of our interview. The Real Estate industry, like the Veterinarian, Nursing and Public Relations fields, is a women-dominated industry. Yet despite this, less than 20 percent of senior positions in Real Estate companies are held by women. In your opinion or experience, what do you think is the cause of this imbalance?

Unfortunately, the statistics tell the objective truth that gender inequality and bias still exists in the real estate industry, particularly at the upper echelon of management. I stand on the shoulders of strong, successful women, like Barbara Corcoran, who have broken gender barriers and paved the way for women like me to forge a successful path in real estate. With that said, there is more work to be done and this effort is most effectively led by Women Leaders of Real Estate and other leadership networks where women show by example that there is no place for biases that stymie women's advancement.

What 3 things can be done by a) individuals b) companies and/or c) society to support greater gender balance going forward?

The effort to close the gap of gender biases in real estate takes a proactive effort on every front, and that includes individuals, corporate America, and our society at large.

The first and most important objective is to heighten awareness that gender bias still exists and ensure accountability.

The second objective is, as a society, we must closely examine our communication that is the result of our culture. Flag the multitudes of microaggressions against women and girls that our culture accepts, for example, “You throw like a girl” or “You whine like a girl.” People must recognize these as unacceptable microaggressions that marginalize women and call people out who use them. This change can come about through our lawmakers who make social policy and punish discrimination. This is also accomplished through education.

Finally, Individuals and companies need to implement mentoring programs for women to support and encourage them to aspire to get hired for or promoted to executive and management roles, as well as board positions.

In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges faced by women executives that aren't typically faced by their male counterparts?

Success demands an extraordinary dedication of time. For women, this is challenging as traditionally they have had less time to devote to career development as they try to maintain a balance between success in the home and success in the workplace. I witness this struggle daily with my mentees. It is clear this remains true today. The second part of this challenge is perception. There is a perception that permeates the workplace that women who have families and child care responsibilities are less committed to their careers. This perception is pervasive in the upper management levels where male executives can be harder on females in their evaluations even when their male counterparts spend similar time away from work coaching their children's sporting teams. Women tend to be at more of a disadvantage when they spend time away for family obligations.

Another notable challenge women face is exclusion from unofficial networking events, such as golfing, hunting, and fishing, to name a few. Although these are social gatherings where male counterparts gather outside of work, it is also an occasion where a lot of business is actually done. During these outings, personal relationships and alliances are formed — all to the exclusion of the women who share the workplace.

Can you share 3 things that most excite you about the Real Estate industry?

1. The real estate industry is constantly evolving. It is becoming more efficient through artificial intelligence (AI) and big data as it disrupts the real estate industry. Client access to data and AI will play a major role in every brokerage.
2. Green real estate trends and climate change will be a bigger deal with impacts on flood insurance. Millennials represent a sizable force in the 2020 housing market.
3. With a more diverse real estate landscape and the larger play of technology, agents are forced to step up their games and evolve with the times or fade out. Agents must demonstrate their value to clients because clients will have more choices as a result of the innovation.

Can you share 3 things that most concern you about the industry? If you had the ability to implement 3 ways to reform or improve the industry, what would you suggest?

1. We lack diversity in real estate leadership. Here, brokerages need to make changes to change the underlying culture to be inclusive, not exclusive, and to implement accountability standards and goals. We need to see a change in their metrics to objectively show that

their internal training/recruitment and retention demonstrates a change in culture.

2. Lack of mentorships for women in the industry. I would suggest that brokerages encourage and pair senior agents with new agents to receive a period of mentorship and coaching. Women need to be empowered with training and tools within organizations to succeed.
3. Brokerages should also sponsor an outside female coach to guide and give seminars for their female agents to help them organize their business and teach them tools to use when confronted with discriminatory practices in the workplace.

What advice would you give to other leaders to help their team to thrive?

Team leaders need to understand challenges that their team is facing on a day to day basis. As a leader, it is our role to find solutions for them to overcome roadblocks so they can succeed.

10. Ok, here is the main question of our interview. You are a “Real Estate Insider”. If you had to advise someone about 5 non intuitive things one should know to succeed in the Real Estate industry, what would you say? Can you please give a story or an example for each?

1. Being a strong agent is about building trust and relationships before closing the transaction. This means focusing on the relationship first and putting the client’s interest first, even when it means steering them away from a deal when you believe it will not serve their best interest.

2. Listen. In sales, we tend to talk to make the sale. It is crucial that you listen so that when you talk, your words are meaningful.
3. You need a mentor. To help you build and refine your business plan and to guide you through the pitfalls, not just when you embark on your career, but throughout your career. Every day I learn a new lesson in real estate, and I hope I never stop learning. And, you must pay it forward. That is what completes the learning circle.
4. The client hired you for your knowledge. Don't be too shy to share it with them even if it is not what they want to hear and they will respect your opinion and your leadership when they cross the finish line. It's okay to put your stake in the ground sometimes.
5. Once you're in — you're all in. We don't make our own schedule. The schedule is largely driven by our demanding clients who want straight answers and they want the answers "now." Showings and phone calls during dinnertime and other inopportune times are commonplace. Nights and weekends are when we make our living.

Because of your position, you are a person of enormous influence. If you could inspire a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the greatest amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)

I am currently working on inspiring a movement that gives women in the workplace meaningful and ongoing advice on how to unveil their potential in the world of real estate sales and management. It is my objective to reach women of all ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds and teach them the importance of equal

access and paying your successes forward and give them the tools to make their dreams come true!

How can our readers follow you online?

Instagram: [@Bonnie Heatzig](#)

Facebook: [Bonnie Heatzig, P.A.](#)

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