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SUCCESS™

VANCOUVER ISLAND EDITION

INVESTIGATING CONCEPTS OF SUCCESS

**Building Success
One Client at a Time**

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By: Kate Richardson



Elizabeth Biberger is a conscientious, thorough real estate professional who has achieved top producer status by focusing on delivering the best possible service for her clients. As a former lawyer, she brings a way of thinking and a level of expertise to her real estate business that are rarely equalled. Having grown up on a dairy farm in the Cowichan Valley, she also has a unique understanding about rural listings, including farms, hobby farms and raw land.

Elizabeth switched from law to real estate when she recognized she needed a change in her life. After graduating from law school at Queen's University and practicing law in Vancouver, she realized that her natural desire to give, share, and help people was not a good fit with the profession. When the conflict began to affect her health, she took some time off to rethink her life.

A year later, Elizabeth decided to join her father, a real estate professional for over 20 years. She earned her real estate

sales licence in 1987 and her Associate Broker's licence in 1989. Having been away from Duncan for many years, starting over again was daunting. But her father was a wise and helpful mentor and Elizabeth discovered that real estate was what she wanted to do for the rest of her life.

"I knew I wanted to work with people, but in law, interactions with people are often stressful and negative," Elizabeth explains. "Many people were baffled by my decision, but I saw real estate as

an opportunity to work with people in an exciting field. I wanted to make the transition while I was young, rather than prolong an unhappy situation. I feel fortunate to have learned that lesson early in life. I love what I do. The opportunity to work with my father made the decision even easier. He believed in me 100 percent and was a great role model. During the 11 years we worked together, we never had a disagreement.”

Elizabeth joined her father’s company, Duncan Realty in 1987. In 1998, Duncan Realty merged with Shirley Moore of Realty World Moore & Company. When the Realty World offices switched to Royal LePage, Elizabeth’s company became Royal LePage Duncan Realty. Although the name has changed, Elizabeth has worked with some of the same people in the office since the day she started and enjoys the supportive atmosphere. Shirley Moore, still the Broker/Owner, says, “Elizabeth’s success is a direct result of her hard work, dedication, and focus on her clients.”

Elizabeth is pleased with the company’s alliance with Royal LePage. She appreciates the access to the professional training and computer tools that Royal LePage provides. The company’s experience and expertise in supporting real estate salespeople are, in Elizabeth’s opinion, second to none.

When she first started in real estate, Elizabeth’s sales experience was limited to selling Avon door to door during her teens. With her father’s support and advice, her background in law and her desire to help people, however, her business grew steadily. Now she lists properties ranging from condominiums under \$100,000 to active farms valued at over one and half million dollars. She works with both buyers and sellers in the Cowichan Valley and enjoys handling both parts of the business.

Elizabeth has a special affinity for marketing acreages. As a child, she spent many happy hours following her father around their dairy farm. That experience,



plus further education, has given her valuable knowledge about the workings of septic systems and wells, the type of land needed for horses versus cows, or for blueberries versus hay. She believes that if she is to do a good job for clients, she needs to be educated about that particular area of real estate, even if it means seeking another real estate representative as a partner. She rarely handles commercial real estate, for example, but when she was asked to be one of the listing agents for the Duncan Court House and Government office building, she contacted a commercial agent in Victoria and submitted a joint proposal. “To give excellent representation to a client is of utmost importance to me,” Elizabeth says. “Working with another agent on that project brought the level of expertise the client deserved.”

Elizabeth’s thorough, detail-oriented approach was also evident when she took on a project of 13 new homes with a co-agent from Victoria. She recommended the services of an interior decorator to decorate the show home, put together colour boards and meet with buyers when they were choosing their floors, finishings and colours. “We made it clear that we were the marketing agent and that our role was to coordinate marketing activities, prepare contracts and follow up on buyer concerns and questions,” Elizabeth says.

“We recommended that a website be developed so the customer could have instant access to information online. We had professional marketing materials prepared and I pre-drafted the standard sales contract. Our approach kept the project organized as everyone had a role. The project owner and the builder were very happy with the outcome.”

Elizabeth’s belief in sharing projects and recognizing others’ expertise is one of the factors contributing to her growing popularity as a referral agent. She takes advantage of the strong Royal LePage relocation program and makes a point of connecting with other agents. Most importantly, however, she has treated all referrals, just as she treats her own clients, “like gold”. Her ability to network, followed up by exceptional service, has helped her build a strong referral business.

Elizabeth’s marketing strategies have also contributed to the steady growth of her business. In her opinion, the most valuable tool for both real estate representatives and clients is the multiple listing service offered through the real estate boards. “Given the number of people looking for their next home on the web, quick posting of listings and pictures is very important in marketing a property as well as supplemental pictures on the

company web site,” Elizabeth says. “Most people today turn first to www.mls.ca in their home search.”

She believes in traditional newspaper advertising, and occasionally, specialty publications for special properties. She responds to any inquiries as soon as she receives them, even if the property is sold. Organized as always, she maintains a complete information book on each listing, ready to give to prospective buyers immediately. She also uses techniques such as offering lunch or a draw to market her listings to other agents and build their enthusiasm about the property. She seeks feedback from other agents when they have shown one of her listings and ensures that her client receives the information quickly.

Elizabeth works with her clients directly to make sure that they all receive her top-quality brand of service. Recently, however, she hired an assistant, Lori Nicol, to handle administrative details. “Lori grew up in the Cowichan Valley

and has years of experience as a real estate assistant,” Elizabeth says. “She has come to me very highly recommended, so I know I will be able to focus on my clients with complete confidence.”

Elizabeth is dedicated to seeing each transaction through to its conclusion for the clients’ benefit. Her reward is the knowledge that she makes a difference in her clients’ lives by relieving the stress of buying or selling real estate. She also enjoys hearing her clients’ stories and developing relationships with them. “Some of my best friends are people who initially came to me as strangers looking to buy or sell a home,” she says. “You can’t beat that.”

Although she has difficulty balancing her life with the level of activity in her business, Elizabeth has great support from her husband, Hubert Biberger. His willingness to “drop things off, pick things up and put up signs” - as well as bring her a morning latte from her favourite coffee haunt - has helped Elizabeth maintain her client focus. She enjoys spending time with

her four children, Jason, Michelle, Heidi and Nikki. Jason and Michelle, both still at home, contribute to family chores and help with work-related projects. Elizabeth also finds balance through her volunteer work. She has been a 4-H leader and a Board member of a local non-profit society. She has also been a member of the business practices committee for the Vancouver Island Real Estate Board for nearly half of her real estate career.

Elizabeth believes strongly that agents have to genuinely care about the people they represent and they have to love what they do. “These qualities, combined with a thorough knowledge of the market in which they work and a strong desire to work hard and do their best day in and day out are the characteristics of a highly successful agent,” she says. “They are successful one client at a time.”

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