

## Top 5 in Real Estate Network® Spotlights

### Redefining Service

by Lesley Geary



**Melinda Estridge**  
 Long and Foster Real Estate, Inc.  
**Years in real estate:**  
**More than 30**  
**Region served:**

**Washington, DC Metropolitan area**

**How are you generating new business in today's market?**

I have always thought that geographic farming for a listing agent is very important. I farm Bethesda and Chevy Chase, Md. I am also a firm believer in community involvement. For instance, I host a Dumpster Donation and Shredding Day so that everyone can bring things to shred. The event is very unique, memorable and helpful to the community at large.

I also put on two seminars a year; one on staging and another on renovation. We hold them at the country club with refreshments. We also host investment seminars. On my team, I have a licensed attorney, someone with a Masters degree in real estate, a former loan officer, and my closing manager has her own website. We have a very high level of educated staff members, which makes it possible for us to provide white-glove service. The competition in our market is fierce and this is what it takes to succeed.

**How do you maximize technology?**

I am one of the top 10 agents in the area and I am probably one of the only ones with a real knowledge of technology. The other top agents let their team members take care of it, but I am constantly working to keep up-to-date with the very latest technology. I am a big believer in social media and even have a "Social Butterfly,"



a photographer who goes out in the community to take pictures for me—perhaps of a beautiful garden or a new store that has just opened—and then posts it to my community website. I also have two business Facebook pages. It all adds up.

**How important is your website to your success?**

I have websites for different purposes. My Estridge website showcases me and gives me credibility. This website is what I use to attract buyers. I also have an IDX site called "Tiger Leads," for which I pay \$3,000 a month. The site allows me to sell my area using its fantastic search engine. We attract anywhere from 40 to 50 percent of our buyers with it, settling two to three tiger leads a month.

**What are you doing differently this year to remain competitive?**

I am tweaking the website, looking at what's working and what's not. I am also trying to spend more time socializing with valuable past clients, especially trying to improve our investment segment.



**Why did you become a member of Top 5?**

Nate Martinez and Bob Levy recommended it and what they like, I like. This market is fiercely competitive and Top 5 provides an excellent leg up.

**Any time-management secrets you'd like to share?**

You really have to time block. I take care of my "to-dos" and calls every Monday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. I call all of my sellers and make prospecting calls once a week. Every day is scheduled, which includes time off and vacations.

**What is the key to a successful life in real estate?**

Schedule time off and if you have a spouse or significant other, create a date night and always plan something fun. When you are with friends, put your iPhone away and have fun. Live in the moment.