rising star

Written By: Katherine Mitchell in collaboration with A.I.
Photos By: Katherine George with George Creatives

Sara Darby

From Corporate to Coastal: Crafting a Legacy in Real Estate

Sara Darby's life reads like a compelling novel: a successful corporate career, a daring cross-country move, and an unexpected love affair with real estate. From managing a substantial portfolio at MetLife in Boston to building an impressive clientele in Wilmington, Sara's path is defined by her bold decisions and a profound passion for transforming lives through real estate.

Early Life and Education

Sara's academic journey began at Stonehill College in North Easton, Massachusetts, where she graduated in 2015 with a degree in Business Administration (Marketing) and Communications. Her education laid a strong foundation for her professional career, equipping her with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in the business world.

Corporate Success and a Bold Transition

Before venturing into real estate, Sara enjoyed a successful career at MetLife Insurance Company in Boston, Massachusetts. As a Senior Account Manager, she managed a ten-million-dollar book of business and led a team of five sales representatives. "I was responsible for client relationship management and new business development," she recalls, highlighting her experience in handling significant responsibilities and leading a team.

However, a cross-country move to Wilmington with her husband marked a pivotal moment in Sara's life. "Only a few short months into living here, we both fell in love with the area, the people, and the coastal way of life and we knew it was time to plant roots! This led us to purchase our first home and our love for the area also inspired us to begin networking with the local community to learn everything we could about investing here by the coast. This is when I truly fell in love with the industry," Sara recalls. This newfound love for Wilmington and its community inspired her to take a significant leap of faith. She decided to leave her stable corporate job and take a risk on herself by following her passion for real estate and investing.

Reflecting on this bold transition, Sara emphasizes how her personal expe-riences have profoundly shaped her professional path. "I believe my personal journey of relocating, buying my first home and building an investment portfolio from the ground up is what inspired me to begin in real estate and motivated me to transition into the business. These experiences provided me with a wealth of knowledge and insight that became the cornerstone of my career in this industry. I am committed to leveraging this firsthand insight to serve as an unparalleled support system and resource for my clients. Whether they're embarking on a new chapter here by the coast or aspiring to achieve similar investment goals, I am here to guide them every step of the way with empathy, expertise, and enthusiasm."

Real Estate Career and Achievements

Sara's real estate journey began with Carolina One Properties, where she joined The Gillespie Group team. Over the past two years, she has built an impressive career, achieving a career volume of $46,637,094, with a total volume of $17,591,765 last year alone. Her success is a testament to her hard work, dedication, and the steadfast support of her team. "I have been with this company and team for the entire duration of my career in the industry, and I could not be more thankful for the people I have met, the experiences I have had working with them, and the unwavering support that I have received over the past two years!" Sara emphasizes.

Her passion for helping clients achieve their real estate goals is evident in her approach. "My favorite part about being a real estate agent is being able to help my clients achieve a goal they have set for themselves," Sara explains. Whether it's a first-time homebuyer or a seasoned investor, she takes pride in the relationships she builds and the impact she has on their real estate journeys. "Whether they are working to become a first-generation homeowner or they are hoping to take that next step in building their rental portfolio, I am truly grateful for the role that I can play and the impact that I can have on each of my clients' real estate journeys."

Sara finds immense joy in the meaningful connections she forms with her clients. "I also love the relationships that are formed as part of working in this industry. For so many of my clients, we have created such incredible personal relationships that we will attend housewarming parties, baby showers, new business openings, etc. We are also resources to one another to bounce ideas off of, such as future investment opportunities, renovation projects, or tax-saving strategies!" This sense of community and mutual support not only enriches her professional life but also highlights her commitment to fostering lasting, impactful relationships.

Distinctive Approach and Client Commitment

What sets Sara apart from other agents is her specialized expertise, dedication, and proven track record of success. "Since beginning in real estate at the beginning of 2022, I have helped over 115 clients throughout the buying and selling processes," she notes. Her commitment to her clients is resolute, whether it's finding the perfect home, crafting winning offers, or providing guidance throughout the process. "Whether it is constantly refreshing the MLS waiting for their perfect home to hit the market, working diligently to craft the winning offer to set them apart from the competition, comparing the rental projections for over a dozen investment opportunities to find the best opportunity, or simply always being readily available to answer any questions they may have throughout the process; my commitment to my clients is truly unyielding."

Her focus on first-time homebuyers is particularly noteworthy. "Since beginning in real estate, I have developed a profound passion for assisting first-time homebuyers in achieving their dreams of homeownership," Sara says. She goes above and beyond to guide them through every step, from connecting them with knowledgeable lenders to researching down payment assistance programs and working with them to identify properties within their budgets and timelines. "Whether it be first-generation homeowners, a growing family, a young couple eager to lay down roots, or even a current renter looking for a more affordable housing option, I am committed to helping my clients achieve their dream of home ownership, begin building equity, and enhance their financial wealth for the future."

Embracing Digital Innovation

A significant game changer for Sara's business has been her effective use of digital and social media as a central pillar for lead generation and brand development strategies. "The main platforms that I focus on are Facebook and Instagram for the opportunities they present for more direct networking and more targeted marketing," she explains. "As a younger agent in this field, I have an in-depth understanding of these platforms and the crucial role they have and will continue to play in our industry in the years to come."

Her innovative approach includes creating a Facebook group targeted towards those considering a move to Wilmington, which has already amassed over 6,500 members and helped her close numerous deals. "In the group, I share information about our different cities, neighborhoods, and properties as well as insight into our local market and the buying process here in Wilmington!"

Personal Life and Balance

Behind Sara's professional success is a supportive and loving family. Her gratitude for them is apparent when she shares, "I am truly so blessed to say that I have the most incredible family, my mom, Kathy, my dad, Gerry and my younger sister, Alexandra, and of course, my husband, Jordan. They have always been there for me in everything that I worked toward in my life, including our cross-country move to Wilmington! Through the late nights, the busy weekends, and the inevitable ups and downs that this industry can bring, my family and husband have been and continue to be my biggest support system and cheerleaders as I continue to grow in this business!"

Her husband also plays a crucial role as her business partner in their investment ventures. "We both bring such different, but valuable skill sets to the table and work so seamlessly together," Sara shares. They currently own a mix of short-term, mid-term, and long-term rentals, continuously growing their investment portfolio. "We just closed on our fifth property in the Wilmington area and our hope is to continue this upward trajectory. I am truly passionate about continuing to grow as a real estate investor, landlord, and businesswoman to create the best portfolio I can for our family."

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Balancing work and life is essential for Sara, and she credits her husband for his support. "The main way that I prioritize my work-life balance is by having an incredibly supportive and understanding husband," she says. "He pushes me to work hard to achieve the goals that I have set for myself while also encouraging me to take breaks when I need them and enjoy the incredible life that we are working so hard to build together." Together, they enjoy activities like pickleball and driving on the beach at sunset with their dogs, Manny and Maisy.

Another way Sara maintains balance is by prioritizing her health and fitness. "A career in real estate can be incredibly demanding at times, and working out has been an amazing outlet for me in my daily routine! Regardless of how tough it is to find the time, I truly believe that taking that time for me to unwind has provided such a great balance in my life!"

Philosophy and Future Goals

For Sara, success is about feeling fulfilled and challenged in her work. "I am very fortunate that real estate has allowed me

the opportunity to feel that sense of gratification through helping so many amazing clients," she reflects. "From supporting a first-time home buyer in achieving their dream of homeownership to helping a client through their cross-country relocation and finding them the perfect home to partnering with an investor to help them find a unicorn of an investment opportunity despite the high-interest rate and competitive environment - helping my clients is truly what makes me feel successful!" She adds, "Given that this industry is constantly evolving, real estate also consistently challenges me to learn and grow and continue to be the best agent I can for myself and my clients!"

Looking ahead, Sara has set ambitious goals for 2024, aiming to assist over fifty clients and exceed $20 to $25 million in closed sales volume. Her commitment to helping others and growing her investment portfolio continues to drive her forward. "In the future, I hope to continue to be recognized as a top-producing agent in this industry and to be able to help even more clients and families achieve their real estate goals here in Wilmington! I also have set a goal to acquire more properties and further expand our investment portfolio."

Final Reflections

Sara Darby's journey is a testament to the power of passion, dedication, and taking bold risks. Her story inspires not only through her professional achievements but also through her commitment to her clients, family, and community. As she continues to make a significant impact in the real estate industry, Sara's future looks incredibly promising, filled with opportunities to help more clients and achieve even greater success.

"Real estate is far more than just a profession to me — I truly believe it is my calling and what I was meant to do," Sara emphasizes. "My passion for helping people is at the core of everything I do. As someone who purchased their first home here and built an investment portfolio from the ground up, I recognize the unique emotions and complexities that come with buying and selling real estate here by the coast and I strive to use that knowledge and experience to ensure that my clients feel supported every step of the way. I also firmly believe that real estate is a powerful avenue for financial freedom. It is this belief coupled with my desire to help others that motivates me each and every day to help my clients on their journey towards homeownership and investing here by the coast. It is also what motivates me to continue to grow our investment portfolio to build that financial wealth for us and our future family one day!"

Sara's dedication, expertise, and passion make her not only a successful real estate agent but also a source of inspiration for anyone looking to make a mark in their chosen field.