



IREM® From the Front Lines Podcast

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Episode 5.11

6/4/24 Release

HGTV Star and IREM Global Summit Speaker Mina Starsiak Hawk

Todd:

Welcome to another edition of From the Front Lines, where we discuss both the day-to-day, and one-of-a-kind issues facing real estate managers. In this episode we talk with Mina Starziak Hawk, who's speaking at the 2024 IREM Global Summit in Indianapolis in October. Mina's a home renovation expert, real estate agent, co-founder and owner of Two Chicks and a Hammer and star of HGTV hit series, Good Bones. Welcome to the podcast, Nina.

Mina:

Hello, Thank you for having me!

Todd:

Now, how did you get into the real estate business, and what keeps you in the industry?

Mina:

I guess probably my first experience was in college. I worked for my property owner. He had a couple apartment buildings and then about 100 single family units. And I started working for him and did move in and move out inspections and dealt with, you know, tenant issues in the office and maintenance and things like that. And I just, I really kind of, I think fell in love with it. And then, you know, I bought my first house and renovated that, got my real estate license a couple years later and just really fell in love with this idea of making real estate something I could do for the rest of my life.

Todd:

Where did you get your passion for bringing distressed properties back to life?

Mina:

Well, probably kind of by default because what I could afford was really the worst of the worst. When mom and I started, we did not have equity lines. Banks wouldn't give us loans. So it was literally savings that I had. And you know, we, we would work and we would buy supplies. So when we were buying these houses, we couldn't afford \$100,000 that would take 50 to fix up and sell for 200. We were buying the \$10,000 ones that were, you know, extremely distressed, doing significant renovations. And so the end result was just so much more dramatic than, you know, new flooring, new paints kind of situation. And what started as a necessity because of finances, I think just kind of turned into our business model because we really enjoyed it.

Todd:

You're an HGTV star, owner of Two Chicks and a Hammer, and you have several other projects. How do you manage these different pursuits and passions?

Mina:

The short answer, not well. I think I've struggled just like most other entrepreneurs and business owners that do have more than one thing going on. I think that's kind of the nature of having that kind of brain is you usually do have more than one thing going on. So while I was filming the show, I had a bigger team. You know, there were six or seven of us. There was people helping like on the back end with just like managing my schedule and, you know, things like this. I had Brittany, who was helping with construction management. MJ was on my design team. So there were just more people. There were more bodies. And now that the show's not actively filming, that significantly pared down. It's myself and Brittany and she manages all my Two Chicks and a Hammer projects. So we kind of have two different business models. Two Chicks and a Hammer could never afford to buy and hold. We always bought, renovated, sold, used that money to buy the next one. Whereas my husband and I have a business where we have long-term rentals that we hold a couple single family and then a couple multifamily. So he really kind of takes the lead on that and I do a lot more of the behind the scenes stuff. So it's really just kind of spreading everything out and being okay with most days, not necessarily going as I planned.

Todd:

Now, you're also a children's author. Can you tell us about your book *Built Together*?

Mina:

Yeah, I really liked the idea. You know, people that are familiar with the show know that my family is not what you would call traditional. It's, you know, lots of marriages, lots of divorces. You know, my fairy godmother was my mom's best friend. And she was like, you know, my aunt and she wasn't family. But I really like this idea of being able to make your family, however it is that works for you. Whether that's friends, whether that's blood, whether that's, you know, your pet is part of it. And this fun play on you can build your house any way you want. Like you can build your family any way you want as long as you have that strong foundation. So it was just a cute way, I think, to kind of put in little kids' brains early on this idea that not every family is going to look the same, and that's okay.

Todd:

IREM's coming to your hometown of Indianapolis. Tell us about the city of Indianapolis. What should we look forward to?

Mina:

Indy's just incredible. In all fairness, I've never lived anywhere else, but I've never wanted to. I think for especially before the show, you know, all anyone thought we had was cows and corn. But our downtown is so cool. I mean, we have so much, we have art, we have so many music venues. All of our professional sports teams are right downtown and you can walk to each arena, which no other city has. So I think that's something that's really unique. And we're just, we're Midwestern and it's really friendly. And, you know, I'll go and travel to New York for work. And I'm trying to make eye contact, just giving people the nods, saying hi. And I'm like, Oh my gosh, I forgot, I'm not in Indiana. Not everyone wants to say hi to me. So it's just a really friendly town.

Todd:

Our meeting theme this year is Power of Purpose. Does that resonate with you?

Mina:

I think, I think it really does because there are so many things that where we're just going through the motion. And I, I think personally, I was doing that for a long time, just going through the motions and not really understanding what the end game was like. What am I trying to do? What am I working this hard for? Is it because I want to retire when I'm 40 or I want to retire when I'm 60 and have met XYZ financial goals? Like what is the purpose of what you're doing? And I think once you can define that and you know, it looks so different for so many people, but I think defining that is really important for being able to set up the steps to reach that purpose. And when you have those kind of stepping stones in place, it gives your day-to-day, I think a lot more meaning, at least for me, it does.

Todd:

What do attendees have to look forward to with your keynote in Indianapolis?

Mina:

I think I am just very, I'm very genuine. I'm very real. And I really love doing a lot of Q&A. And I think this will be a really fun, interesting group to do it with. And you know, we just talk about everything. So the good stuff, the bad, the ugly, all of it. Nothing's really kind of off the table. So it usually makes for a really un conversation with the audience.

Todd:

Thanks so much for joining us, Mina.

Mina:

No problem. Thanks for having me!

Todd:

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