



The Broker Network: building communities by building connections.

Great realtors are more than sales agents. They're connectors—people who bring residents together, people who cultivate communities, people like Garrett Chadney and Anthony Castro, principal brokers and owners of The Broker Network, LLC.

For Garrett, Anthony, and their staff, the goal is to use every interaction with home buyers, sellers, and developers to improve lives and leave a positive impact. It's a job that doesn't end with real estate transactions. Whether volunteering at Habitat for Humanity or running into neighbors at the market, the Portland, Oregon-based team is always at work building their community, one nail or friendly "hello" at a time.

"To me, community means doing right by the people that are around you," said Garrett. "From Portland to Vancouver, Gresham to Bend, we serve a large but still very tight-knit region. Whatever we do is going to have an impact on those communities." "Positive interactions can happen anywhere," said Anthony. "Whether it's at home, in your neighborhood, at your office, or through your charitable organization, community is where you make it."

That all-embracing focus on enriching local communities has served The Broker Network well over the past decade-plus. Since its founding in 2008, the company has helped numerous families find their dream homes, opening multiple offices and expanding its team to encompass more than 40 agents along the way.

The three pillars.

Garrett and Anthony know that the fastest way to grow their impact—and grow their business—is to frame everything in terms of three pillars of people: clients, agents, and community. Beyond local volunteering and involvement, that means offering an extraordinary experience for clients and empowering agents to perform at their best.

"People are the most important piece to our industry and what we do," said Garrett. "Without people, there is no Broker Network. Investing in people—making them feel important, showing them we care about them—is the best investment we can make as business owners."

Agents are a critical—and in many real estate businesses, critically neglected—piece of the puzzle. To provide agents

with the best possible platform, The Broker Network needs to ensure all parties share expectations and can continuously communicate about transactions. Real estate is complex, unpredictable, and, at times, emotionally fraught. Building issues come to light. Buyers and sellers have second thoughts. Deals fall through. Proper communication can ameliorate these problems and prevent further headaches.

"If people have an expectation of what's going to happen and it happens, they're happy," said Garrett. "Problems arise when expectations are not met. We want to make sure all our agents personally tell the client, 'this is what's going to happen,' and we do it. We don't want to have them come back to us and say, 'you didn't do this or I thought you were going to be doing that.' It's important that we meet those expectations right away and exceed them where possible."

Modern technology and our always-on culture have heightened these demands. Like many small business owners, Garrett is grateful he can use apps and services to compete with larger organizations, but recognizes how the same advances have magnified client expectations.

"Everyone expects 'right here, right now,'" he said. "We have to set those expectations up front, saying, 'yes, you can reach me anytime via text, email, phone call, Skype—you can get in touch with me through any platform you choose and I will get back to you.'"

Heightened expectations and inferior solutions don't mix.

"Of course, even the most dedicated realtor can't get back to everyone at every hour of the day. To balance client demands with the realities of doing business, and to make sure agents have the space and resources they need, Garrett and Anthony knew they needed additional support. They tried out an answering service. Unfortunately, that company proved to be the wrong fit.



“The service level we got from them was not on par with our expectations of ourselves,” said Anthony. “We had a number of instances where callers would relay their disappointment with the person who answered the phone. The receptionists didn’t sound happy—they had their script and would just read it, monotone, like there was no person behind the call.”

Anthony quickly saw how this reflected poorly on his firm:

“Clients were thinking this is somebody who works directly for us. Behind the scenes, they don’t know we have an answering service taking calls for us. That was really discouraging.”

Ruby brings friendly professional service—from just down the street.

Disappointed in the services they tried, Anthony and Garrett considered hiring a receptionist. However, as a smaller company, The Broker Network couldn’t afford to bring in a salaried employee whose only job was answering calls. In Ruby, they found a personalized customer service solution that fits within their budget. Plus—as a bonus for the community-centric real estate firm—Ruby was located down the street.

“When we came across Ruby, we were still in our old office in downtown Portland,” said Anthony. “Ruby was just around the corner. So, that was exciting, to be able to support a local business. But then we tried out Ruby’s service, and the difference was exponential. The level of service and the care that went into the call were far beyond the experiences we had with other companies, where people were simply reading scripts. The moment we switched to Ruby, all of that changed. It went from a script to somebody who actually was behind the scenes and really cared about the customer. Ultimately, that’s what we wanted.”

What Broker Network agents and clients wanted was what anyone calling a business wants: to speak with a real person. Anthony characterizes the effect as “Ruby happiness.”

In addition to their professionalism and friendly demeanor, Ruby’s virtual receptionists give Broker Network staff some much-needed flexibility.

“We have our broker advocate who answers calls and when she’s unavailable, we have Ruby to back us up,” said Anthony. “They go hand-in-hand.”

Less stress, happier clients, better connections.

“Ruby allows us the freedom to be able to go out, do business, and make sure our agents are taken care of,” said Garrett. “We know that if someone calls in and our broker advocate can’t answer the phone call, it’s going to go directly to Ruby and they’re going to take care of that caller and get their message to the right person among our agents.”

Speaking as a realtor himself, Garrett appreciates the peace of mind he gets from the knowledge that no client is receiving anything less than full, personalized attention.

“When I’m showing property, I don’t answer the phone,” he said. “I want to make sure my time is spent with those clients in front of me. That’s the beauty of having a company like Ruby: the call will go straight to them, they’ll handle any immediate requests, and I’ll be able to call that person back in short order without interrupting my client. That’s more important than anything—to make sure clients feel like our attention is directly on them, at all times.”

For Anthony and Garrett, it all comes back to those three pillars—clients, agents, and community. Ruby checks every box for The Broker Network because the two businesses share a common goal: building meaningful connections.



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