

A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a black blazer with white trim and black pants, is sitting on a wooden chair in a garden. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The background shows a house with a stone wall and a large green bush.

Profiles of **Success**TM

TORONTO CENTRAL EDITION

**The Art of Real Estate...
Life • Style • Vision**

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By: Katie Richardson

Energetic, hard-working, bright and witty, Christine Simpson has developed a brand for her successful real estate business that reflects her enthusiasm for life, love of style, and optimistic vision of the future. The Art of Real Estate ... Life Style Vision is a fitting theme for Christine Simpson and her approach to business and life.

Characteristically, Christine entered the world of real estate on a dare. She graduated from fashion merchandising in 1976 and spent the next 14 years building a lucrative and successful career in the Canadian fashion industry. Then a friend challenged her to bring her honesty and integrity to an entirely different industry: real estate. Unable to resist the dare, Christine took her real estate courses and passed with flying colours. Next, she upped the ante by applying to Johnston and Daniel, a company known for its fixed policy for "never" hiring new agents. In her direct and inimitable fashion, she convinced the organization to take a gamble on her.

Christine started working in real

estate in February 1990, just as the market was plunging into a devastating downturn. Unfazed, Christine said it was the best time to start. "You really had to work hard to learn the business,"



she explains. "And I was a fresh face in a tough time so it worked out well for me. It was, in fact, a wonderful advantage." Being hired by Johnston and Daniel, she says, gave her immediate credibility in her marketing area, the west end of Toronto. Even people working in her office assumed she had just transferred from another Johnston and Daniel office!

Christine turned her "advantage" into productivity, winning all the top Johnston and Daniel awards. Since Royal LePage bought Johnston and Daniel in 1994, Christine has continued

her winning ways. She has been a member of the National Chairman's Club, Royal LePage's top award, consistently since 1996, and she has been the top individual agent in her office for the past 11 years. She has also won the Directors Platinum Award, and the Lifetime Award of Excellence. Christine considers Royal LePage to be a cutting edge Canadian company. She appreciates the company's progressive attitude towards agents' needs, technology, and its top-notch education

courses. Through one of those courses, Christine has qualified as a Registered Relocation Specialist.

Christine loves the creative side of the real estate business. She takes her own pictures, writes her own descriptions, and even works with photographers to determine the most marketable angles for virtual website

tours of properties. Multi-talented as ever, she also enjoys the numbers side of the business. "Math is such an exact science and a crisp ledger is beautiful," she claims. For pleasure, she took accounting and computer science at the University of Toronto. Her boundless energy keeps her working "24/7". "I stay focused, and I have fun," she says.

Constantly seeking variety, Christine splits her time evenly between buyers and sellers, and deals with properties from rentals to homes worth over a million dollars in neighbourhoods such as Bloor West, High Park, Baby Point, Etobicoke, Sunnylea and The Kingsway. She also works with builders, finding properties, and then selling the house, once it is completed. Her creativity helps in collaborating with builders or clients who want to do renovations. Her visual and spatial skills allow her to make inspired room layout or design suggestions.

Christine uses her strong networking skills to support her business. About 75 percent of her business comes from past clients, repeat business, and referrals from colleagues, which speaks volumes to client satisfaction. Her extensive marketing strategies, which bring in the remaining 25 percent of her business, run the gamut from pre-home inspections to advertising in national and local papers to special luncheons for agents. "I started doing luncheons as a way to get the agents into one of my listings when the market was stagnant," Christine says. "It proved so popular and successful that I continued doing it." Christine also distributes a newsletter to her clients - written by herself, of course - four times a year.

Christine has no partners or buyer agents. Completely self-motivated, she sets objectives and competes with herself to achieve them. Performing all aspects of the work herself gives her a tighter grasp on what she needs to do to reach her goals. Working independently also

strengthens her self-discipline and organizational skills and allows her to be on top of any situation that arises. As one of her clients has said, "Christine is the professional you want on your side - knowledgeable, experienced, respected and a ton of fun too!"

Christine's clients range from young first-time buyers to corporate presidents, but she treats them all the same and expects to find a "connection" with each client. And with Christine's broad range of interests and activities, finding that connection is easy. She has achieved a black belt in Aikido (Japanese martial arts); she loves to ride horses, is a passionate advanced scuba diver (currently working on rescue diver certification) and is a well-read savvy businesswoman able to discuss world affairs. She loves the theatre, supports the National Ballet, and even sponsors a minor league baseball team for young boys called "Christine's Comets."

Christine considers herself lucky to have the stimulation and encouragement



she needs to keep her on track at home. "My husband, Michael Sesto, is my inspiration and the love of my life," says Christine. "He's a unique human being, with hidden talents. His demeanour and his ability to focus, analyze and learn, suit me perfectly. Most importantly, we laugh every morning." Christine and Michael actually met at a martial arts class when Christine was studying for her black belt. After accomplishing her goal, she



helped Michael reach his. Michael's background is as eclectic as Christine's. After graduating in marine biology, he became an international model, then returned to school in his mid-thirties to study graphic design and advertising. His interests are as diverse as Christine's, including scuba diving, sailing, snowboarding, golfing, and music composition. Did I mention he loves to golf?

Christine's other source of inspiration is her love of people. "I'm a true people person," says Christine. "As a realtor, you need to be able to put yourself in the other person's position so that you can understand what they need. My experience, from growing up in a small town in Ontario to living in Manhattan, from the fashion industry to real estate, has helped me become extremely adaptable - a real chameleon. That ability gives me the insight I need to help people find their dream."

Christine had a serious skiing accident in 1999 and spent a year on crutches and a cane, but her need for

people and stimulation propelled her into overdrive. "I had my bedroom outfitted with special tables, my laptop, and I had spikes attached to my crutches so I could continue my business, much to my husband's chagrin," says Christine. "Other agents helped by transporting me, but essentially I sold houses while I was lying on my back. I do not have the ability to be motionless." But Christine is not asking for sympathy. "This is a lifestyle, not a job," she explains. "Agents who think of it as a job will struggle." Her advice to new agents reflects this belief. She recommends that new agents, as well as being diligent, patient, and working hard, consider their career as a lifestyle choice. "Don't be afraid of rejection," she advises. "Don't be afraid to take risks. Be social. Be able to talk about many topics so you can find a connection with people. At the same time, hone your sales and negotiation skills to help your clients. It's a phenomenal lifestyle and I embrace it!"

Christine demands much of herself

in her hard-driving, laser-focused approach to her business. She's the optimist's optimist, with a philosophy that every day is truly a great day. She says, "As long as I am alive, I can deal with anything." Christine's infectious energy and ability to overcome life's challenges, her professional skills, overwhelming love for people, and compassion for her family, friends and clients make up the winning combination that sets her apart and contributes to her extraordinary success in life.

Christine Simpson expresses her love of life and the Art of Real Estate ...with Life, Style and Vision.

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