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A man with short hair, wearing a white dress shirt and a patterned tie, is sitting in a black office chair at a desk. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. His hands are resting on the desk in front of him. In the background, there is a laptop computer and a telephone on the desk. The wall behind him is light-colored.

**AIM TO BE
THE BEST**

“I aim to provide the best service my clients have ever received from a Realtor.”

By Sarah Ennals



Prudential Town Centre Realty was established in 1989. With locations in Oakville, Milton, Port Credit, Kingston, Ottawa, Brockville, and Fort Erie, and with more than 250 agents on the job, it consistently ranks in the top three against its competition, crediting its success to having “the right people, the right attitude, the right tools.” One of those people is Ian Hallford, who has received awards from the company each of his 8 years in the business, including the coveted President’s Circle designation twice; placing him in the top 3% of Prudential Realtors in all of Canada.

According to Ian, he chose to work for Prudential because he was impressed with the personal level of service and cooperation he had noticed in his local office during the job interview. It proved to be the right decision. “The in-house training and support I received from the first day on was outstanding, and definitely contributed to my fast start in the business,” he says. “Also, there’s no backstabbing,” he laughs. “You can leave a file on your desk and no one will try to steal a sale from you.”

Ian began with a B.A. in Applied Arts from Ryerson University, “more of a

communications degree,” and learned to think on his feet during five years of managing restaurants, followed by ten years in the corporate world of investment banking. He had always been curious about real estate, and his father, an architect (now retired) had a great deal of success with real estate investments, which whetted Ian’s curiosity about the business.

“I saw the potential to build my own business, which would provide me with the freedom to pursue other ventures. I love having the framework to create my success based on my own efforts. Spending time with

different people makes each day interesting and exciting. Seeing the smile on the face of a client after the successful completion of a deal is very gratifying.”

Ian’s commitment to professional service combines the strength of a major corporation with the individual attention he provides to each and every one of his clients. On his website, satisfied customers commend his ‘no pressure’ style and his ability (and efforts) to understand exactly what each client is searching for in a house. “Ian really listens to your needs and preferences. Unlike other agents we’ve worked with who say what you want to hear to get a deal to happen, we asked for, and he gave us, his honest opinion.”

For Ian, the secret to success is quite simple: listen to your clients, treat everyone as you would like to be treated, work honestly and with determination, and the results will take care of themselves. The function of a Realtor is to bring the experience of many transactions to what for most clients is unfamiliar territory. “Not only is it very expensive to ‘learn from your mistakes’ but very few people move often enough to gain the needed experience,” he says.

His clients are split “almost exactly 50/50 between buyers and sellers.” Most of his business occurs in Oakville and the surrounding area, and Ian is up to the challenge of finding any type of home or property someone is looking for, or selling any home. With customers ranging from first time buyers to seniors to investors, he deals mainly with residential resale homes; these can include “anything from condos for \$200K to custom-built homes for \$1.5 M and higher.”

Also, Prudential provides relocation services to many Fortune 500 Corporations and Ian has been involved in numerous transactions in this area. The clients connected to these relocations - usually executives - are used to getting top-notch service, and have very high expectations. The homes involved tend to



be expensive, and the pressure is often increased due to the stress of relocating.

For sellers, he has a comprehensive marketing program - a broad spectrum of advertising media ensures good value for clients looking to sell: newspaper ads – “sellers like to be able to see their home promoted in the local paper” - but also listings in the Real Estate Book. Ian has a full page in every issue and rotates his listings carefully so that every one of his clients gets maximum exposure for their home. Of course there’s also internet-based promotion: virtual tours and auxiliary pictures for listings, websites, and the on-line

Multiple Listing Service (MLS) at www.mls.ca

“I use all the latest technological tools that are available to promote both my listings and myself. So do many of my fellow Realtors, naturally. Ultimately, what separates a great Realtor from an average Realtor is service, knowledge and attitude,” Ian says. “I aim to provide the best service my clients have ever received from a Realtor.”

Ian makes it clear, however, that his first commitment is to his family: “The values I was raised with by my parents have stayed with me and guided me. Irene, my wife of

fifteen years, provides great support and encouragement for me. I make a point of being home for dinner every night, no matter how busy I am. I am able to walk my seven-year-old daughter, Sandra, to school each morning, and walk home with her each afternoon. We take regular vacations as a family, to get away from the hectic pace of life.”

“Our church is a big part of our lives, and I am the Chair of its Finance Board at the moment. My family and I support many local charities, and sponsor two children, one in Africa and one in South America. I have been a member of various committees for the Oakville, Milton and District Real Estate Board (OMDREB) during the years I have been a Realtor, and have been actively involved in fundraising to benefit the community

I live and work in. It feels great to give something back.” Ian explains.

He attends monthly meetings with the local chapter of an organization called Christian Business Ministries of Canada (CBMC), where he networks with people from various businesses. As well, he is involved with a networking group of fellow Christian Realtors who meet regularly for breakfast. In both groups, guest speakers discuss interesting and diverse business experiences.

Ian credits his family, his clients, and his faith as motivations to work hard in a very demanding business. “Don’t think it’s going to be easy,” he warns would-be Realtors. “Be prepared to work long days, odd hours, and especially be prepared to face potential rejection on a daily basis! Don’t take

any of it personally, but learn from everything that happens, so that you can grow as an individual and as a businessperson. If you have given something your best shot, that’s all you can ask of yourself. The rest is up to someone else. My best advice is to work hard, do your best, and above all, keep smiling!”

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