



## Broker-to-Broker

# Seeking support, independent broker joins franchise system

Justine Jimenez Garcia spent more than two decades as a small independent broker. Now that she aims to ramp up the size of her business, Jimenez Garcia has joined the ERA network.

“The business is just changing so fast that it’s hard for an independent broker to keep up,” Jimenez Garcia says. “Why fight it?”

Jimenez Garcia runs the nine-agent Countywide Properties ERA Powered in Miami. She is recruiting agents and hopes to add locations.

Jimenez Garcia spoke to *Real Estate Broker’s Insider* about her career and her business philosophy.

■ **I was a cashier at a Food Value store when I was 13.** They thought I was 17, but back then, they didn’t ask. It was a chain of markets in Miami. If you wanted more money, you had to work long hours, even Sundays. After that, I went into furniture sales and then car sales.

■ **Set goals and think bigger.** If I can give advice to anybody that’s starting out, it’s definitely to set goals. Write them down and envision them. And don’t let anybody hold you back.

■ **I’m an immigrant.** I was born in Cuba. I was never taught to save and invest. Those were things I learned on my own. About seven years ago, I started volunteering with the National

Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals (NAHREP). Then I went on to become the first woman president of NAHREP in South Florida. Now I’m a national coach for them. We’re about helping Latinos become wealthy through homeownership. Unless we’re raised here, we’re not taught about wealth creation.

■ **The biggest challenge for myself and for most entrepreneurs is access to capital.** Especially when you’ve got companies like Compass out there paying agents to go with them. It’s crazy. One person will get \$20,000. Another will get \$10,000. I wouldn’t say we need to give agents an incentive. But we have to have the platform, the model, the lead generation.

■ **Don’t be the smartest person in the room.** I always try to surround myself with people who are doing bigger and better things. That pushes me. Armando Tam from NAHREP made me aware of the need to really start masterminding.

■ **My daughter is off to college now, and I really wanted to not miss her childhood.** Family is first, so I stayed small. I wasn’t ready to devote time to my business. Now I’m ready.

■ **I’m always going to continue to sell.** I don’t think a broker can do sales training and go up there and try to tell agents to do something they can’t do themselves. I think that’s important. I’m mainly a listing agent. I don’t want to

### Broker Bio

**The Broker:** Justine Jimenez Garcia of Countywide Properties ERA Powered.

**Success Strategy:** Affiliating with a national brand to drive growth.

**Recommended Reading:** *The Richest Man in Babylon*, insightful advice on thrift, financial planning, and personal wealth. “Agents make one commission, and they’re out there buying fancy purses. We all like nice things, but you have to save for a rainy day,” says Jimenez Garcia.



compete with them, but I have my own clients who will always work with me. I love going out with my agents on listing appointments. And door knocking — I love door-knocking. The worst somebody can say is no.

■ **I still do the old-fashioned floor time.**

We're in a location on Coral Way where there's heavy traffic. We just had a buyer from Colombia who came into the office. There's a schedule. When you're here, you take all the calls. With ERA, we have Lead Router, and I can put the leads on a rotation. Whoever picks up first gets the lead.

■ **Realtors think open houses don't sell houses, but I prove them wrong.** I had an open house four times and nobody came. Can you imagine? Nobody came. But I'm persistent, and on the fifth open house, the buyer came through the door. I love interacting with people, so I knock on 20 or 30 doors the day before the open house. People have the misconception that social media is the answer in real estate. The people who bought that house saw it on social media — but they didn't buy it on social media. They bought it in person.

■ **We're a full-service residential and commercial company.** We do all aspects, from leasing to business opportunities. We do deals from \$50,000 all the way up to \$12 million. It's important for me to be knowledgeable about the big deals and the small deals so I can support my agents.

■ **ERA has a model, and it's a successful model.** Nowadays, as an independent broker, you go to an expo, and there are 150 companies doing CRM, there's 150 doing lead generation, there's 150 doing websites. Having someone putting it all together really helps. And

ERA lets you keep your name — now I'm Countywide Properties ERA Powered. For those clients I've been servicing for 22 years, I have the same name. It's kind of like when I got married. I kept my name and added my husband's name.

*"I always try to surround myself with people who are doing bigger and better things."*

■ **This business is going to continue to be about relationships.** You cannot base your business on social media. Real estate agents are going to continue to be relevant.

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## In fast-changing industry, brokers who don't adapt disappear (Continued from page 1)

that thrived in the era of newspaper ads and agent-filled offices didn't make the transition to digital marketing and remote work, the paper reported.

"Technology was changing so fast, and they were not changing," one of the company's former top producers

told the *Register*. "Everybody's working on their laptops in coffee shops and their cars. Our beautiful offices were not being used. It's a whole new world."

In an environment of constant disruption and cutthroat competition,