



## **BMAR's game plan: Let's get to work!**

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By Eliezer Rodriguez

It has now been two months since I became 14th association executive officer for the Bronx-Manhattan North Association of Realtors (BMAR). So far it's been an incredible learning experience and my travel to either represent my Association or to learn about our industry has been fruitful. In January, I flew to and from the National Association of Realtors' (NAR) orientation for New Association Executives in Chicago and boy were my arms tired. Then, in February, I drove to the New York State Association of Realtors' (NYSAR) Mid-Winter Business Meetings in Albany. There was too much invaluable information to digest in one sitting and the resources available are voluminous.

On my peaceful ride back from Albany, I mentally drafted the introduction below. You may cut and paste it in case you are asked about the new executive at BMAR. Following my introduction is an outreach plan that includes information I collected, conversations had with Richard Guarino, BMAR's current president, and ideas shared by other members.

"Eliezer Rodriguez, Esq., 'Eli' as he likes to be called, is best known for completing Roberto Clemente's last humanitarian effort. Roberto Clemente died on December 31, 1972, while attempting to deliver aid to the earthquake victims of Nicaragua. The following year, Clemente became the first Hispanic inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. With the help from Mark Engel, president of Langsam Property Services and Dr. Elias 'Mr. Bronx' Karmon, Eli was able to charter an airplane, fill it with 16,324 pounds of food and medicine and deliver the aid to Nicaragua on December 31, 2005, 33 years after Mr. Clemente's death. A documentary about Eli's work is under way along with other related projects."

"Eli was born in Orocovis, Puerto Rico and grew up in Philadelphia. After completing his tour of duty, Sergeant Rodriguez went on to graduate from Kansas State University with a B.A. degree in Speech, pre-law and Social Science. In 1985, he completed the Senior Institute of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Program at Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government. In 1986, he was hired by the New York City Department of Sanitation to plan and create recycling initiatives. Eli managed the implementation of recycling into New York City's 59 Community Boards and is credited for coining the Spanish word for 'to recycle'—'reciclar.' Eli resigned to attend the City University of New York School of Law."

"At his graduation from Law School in 1999, Eli received the Father Joseph P. Fitzpatrick Scholarship for furthering the interests of Puerto Ricans, other Latinos and communities of color. He also received the Theodore F. Kupferman Public Service Award for his service to the law school community. This prestigious award is given to one member of the graduating class. In 2006, Eli opened his own legal practice with a concentration on Real Estate, Matrimonial and Family Law. Eli

serves as counsel to several community organizations; is very active in his community and has been appointed to serve on Bronx Community Board 11. Currently, Eli serves as Chairman of the Bronx YMCA Board of Managers and was recently elected to serve a one-year term on New York City's YMCA board of directors."

"There you have it; three paragraphs of ammunition should 'Eliezer' come up in a conversation. My immediate plan is to strengthen our home base by the addressing the 3Rs: retention; recruitment; and recoupment. Our plan will be powered by S.M.A.R.T. goals; goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely."

The first point is retention. No one can argue that our future development is dependent on being in-sync with the trends and by addressing the needs of our members. To keep my members, we must identify and meet their needs. Calls will be made asking if I may come by to introduce myself, discuss issues and to identify needs over a cup of coffee. (I like my coffee on the darker side with one splenda.)

The second point is recruitment. Our members are in the business of building communities. We will expand on our members' achievements and become such an integral part of the community that you are going to want to be a part of the "New Bronx" we are helping our borough president build. We will be visible and vocal in letting our elected official, community leaders and concerned and interested neighbors know that BMAR is absolutely relevant in every issue that affects The Bronx, Manhattan-North and beyond.

It's time to maximize our outreach by working with the nine Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) and 12 Community Boards in the Bronx to carve out a plan to take care of our own. There is no reason why we cannot share resources to seize every viable opportunity for the benefit of our home base. We have common goals. So, let's get to work!

The final point is recoupment. Why did you leave us? If your business is located in the Bronx and your membership is elsewhere, it's time to come home. The Bronx is booming and you can help take the home of the Bronx Bombers to greater heights. Cristina Taylor, a BMAR board member, approached me with Operation Bring Back the Transactional Players to the Table. I support her plan to have scattered meetings throughout the community to spread her message that "there is no place like home."

The two most influential men in my life will forever be known as Realtors. As Realtors we adhere to a Code of Ethics, which governs how we treat clients, prospects and each other. My goal is to call you a Realtor and allow you to use the Realtor trademark. However, that is only possible if you are a member of the National Association of Realtors. As Realtors, we have an obligation to promote and protect our industry and that includes involvement in the political arena. Recently, my son Miguel approved a loan from his allowance, so I can make a donation to the Realtors Political Action Committee, RPAC. Now I am empowered to ask others to contribute.

Matthew Schmeltzer, immediate past president and Board member, and what a gentleman, has clearly stated RPAC's purpose, "RPAC doesn't buy votes. RPAC enables Realtors to raise and spend money to elect candidates who understand and support the issues that are important to their profession and livelihood." It will please Matthew and me to no end to get 100% participation from our readers. If you like our 3R plan, then donate at least \$20 to RPAC.

In closing, I want to thank all the Realtors that have helped me thus far. I want to congratulate Kathy Zamechansky, BMAR's president-elect, for receiving the 2013 Bronx Leadership Award. I want to thank Susan Goldy, immediate past president of NYSAR and BMAR past president, for the

statewide recognition she brought to BMAR and for her leadership in raising millions to help Realtors affected by Super Storm Sandy. Kathy and Susan are two wonderful and dynamic women. Now, batter up!

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association executive of BMAR, Bronx, N.Y.

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