



O'Connell of Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty discusses most her daring career move

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Deirdre O'Connell

SVP, General Sales Manager

Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty

6 years with firm

22 years in industry

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How do you and/or your firm use social media?

Social Media is clearly an important and ever evolving aspect of everyday personal and professional life. Daniel Gale Sotheby's has dynamically integrated social media into individual agent and company marketing efforts. We have an active company Facebook page and each office and most agents have a strong presence on Facebook as well. Our Facebook pages publicize agent and office activities, Open Houses, community events and real estate and business-related news. We encourage and assist agents in using social media tools and regularly schedule "click nights" during which we learn and use a new social media outlet.

What is your biggest leadership challenge, other than the "glass ceiling"?

A significant challenge is leading agents and managers of multiple generations and encouraging the less technologically able agents to utilize email, texting and social media. At the other end of the spectrum, younger agents who find technology a natural way of communication have to be encouraged to use the phone and schedule face to face meetings with clients and customers who expect to communicate in that fashion. We all have to be mindful in every conversation and in every interaction of how the other person prefers to communicate.

What is the most daring thing you've done for your career? How did it turn out for you?

In 2003 I opened Deirdre O'Connell Real Estate in Manhasset. At that time my 5 children ranged in age from 13 to 5 years. I made a budget of expected expenses and with my husband's cautious encouragement opened a line of credit on our home to fund the first year. It was the most daring, scary, difficult and ultimately the best decision I ever made. In 2006 I opened a second office and 2 years after that I made the second best professional decision of my careerI sold my company to Daniel Gale Sotheby's International. Realty.

Which project, deal or transaction was the "game changer" in the advancement of your career?

Joining Daniel Gale Sotheby's was my game changer. I brought a team of hardworking agents with

me who, with the added advantage of Daniel Gale Sotheby's marketing tools, training and the added strength of the Sotheby's brand, became even more successful. Since joining Daniel Gale Sotheby's, I've worked with Daniel Gale Sotheby's senior management to open four successful North Fork office. I now manage the Manhasset office and oversee Garden City and Carle Place. In January I was named General Sales Manager of the organization.

What do you consider to be the most successful way to increase referrals?

Having the right person in charge of the Relocation Department is the best way to increase referrals. This leader must constantly network to build the referral base and create an agent culture that values referrals. Daniel Gale Sotheby's has Christine Petersen. Christine's tenure at Sotheby's International Realty in London brings a wealth and depth of the international connections vital in today's market. Christine's knowledge of and enthusiasm for relocation and referral business is a tremendous asset.

What is the BEST advice you have ever received?

My friend and mentor Ed Devlin invited me to lunch. Over a grilled cheese and tomato sandwich enthusiastically told me that I was the right age, had the right connections, the strong work ethic and talent to own and run a successful real estate company. He gave me all I really needed ... encouragement and confidence.

What is your favorite tip for balanced living?

I am not very good at balancing my life, but I think I integrate my life well. When my children were young, I always thought of ways for them to help me and encouraged them to make the office a place where they and their friends were welcome. I see most of the people I work with as friends and while we work very hard together, we also find ways to play. I am fortunate to love my job and my colleagues.

8. Where would you like to be in 10 years?

I want to continue to be an integral part of Daniel Gale Sotheby's branding effort and contribute to our growth and success as we identify and enter profitable new markets, tackle new challenges and thrive in an evolving real estate marketplace.