

Courtney Poulos ACME Real Estate Luxury Boutique Agency Los Angeles, Southern California & Orlando, Florida Top Company in 2022 | Ask About Team Agent Scholarship Program

Courtney Poulos Interview 2022-07-20

[00:00:00] **Joey Myers:** Hello and welcome to the Lead Generation Strategies Podcast. I'm your host, Joey Myers from lead generation SEO services.com and EnFuegoMedia.

[00:00:15] With me today, I have the honor and pleasure of having Miss Courtney Poulos. I got her last name correct there. So welcome to the show, Courtney.

[00:00:24] **Courtney Poulos:** Thank you so much for having me.

[00:00:27] **Joey Myers:** Cool to have you. We had a conversation probably a couple months ago or so, and at first it was just more of a marketing type thing. We were talking about the content marketing distribution that we do.

[00:00:36] If that can help you guys, we just had a fascinating conversation about real estate in Los Angeles versus Florida and things like that. I know your company is Acme real estate, which I love that name and it's for those who want to find it, which we can promote that at the end.

[00:00:50] Acme, like the A C M E dash R E. Dot com.

[00:00:55] Again, Los Angeles and Florida, we'll get into that a little bit why so far apart and then we'll promote what you want to do there but go into a little bit more detail about what you guys do, Courtney down there in LA, in Florida.

What interesting things are you doing with a real estate company in California AND Florida?

[00:01:05] **Courtney Poulos:** I started ACME in 2011. I'm the broker owner and CEO. I started ACME because I was very frustrated with big box brokerages and the limitations that they put on people's marketing ability, ideas, and inventions and all the things.

[00:01:21] If you know me, I'm a rebel spirit. I don't like asking for permission. I felt very strangled by bureaucracy at a big brokerage. Now, some people thrive in it and I'm not knocking that. For me I'm much more about creativity and transformation.

[00:01:35] In creating ACME, we've really innovated the way marketing is done in Los Angeles when it comes to real estate and a lot of bigger brokerages have taken notice and have started using the people we use and trying to imitate the thing that we do. I know they can't imitate me.

[00:01:54] So for us, it's about creating real estate as lifestyle, never [00:02:00] cheating out on the tactile experience of real estate. That means higher quality printed materials. Our brochures look like magazines, but they're not magazines, they're dedicated specifically to each individual property, but each one is custom done by our own graphic designer who is only working for us when it comes to real estate.

[00:02:22] It's not like we outsource a lot of the stuff that's brand related to bigger companies nationwide, like we quality control every piece that goes out. This year we've also really started creating content. Video content, which was something that I've always wanted to do but this year it felt like the right time.

[00:02:43] We launched a podcast called Under All Is the Land. You can find that on YouTube, [youtube.com/ACME real estate](https://www.youtube.com/ACMErealstate).

[00:02:51] We talk about everything that we wish people were talking about the industry of real estate but, people are scared to say things that are controversial in our industry.

[00:03:00] All in all, what I'm trying to say is ACME zone transformation brand. We are about transforming homes, neighborhoods, communities, lives. We believe in the transformative power of real estate to create legacy wealth, to lift people up and ultimately equalize races, genders, species, whatever. Ownership is the way to go.

[00:03:21] If you're feeling displacement and it's certainly the way that most wealthy people in our country have made their money. Our marketing is not just to the rich and famous, we market to everyday people who want to change their lives and that's been a cornerstone of us creating editorially for our listings.

[00:03:37] Like this is the house that you deserve for the price that you're going to pay. .

[00:03:41] **Joey Myers:** If people go to the website Acme slash re.com.

[00:03:44] **Courtney Poulos:** ACME dash RE

[00:03:46] **Joey Myers:** Not the word dash, but the dash.

[00:03:48] **Courtney Poulos:** Yeah.

[00:03:48] **Joey Myers:** Hyphen. Exactly. You go to the website; you can really see a very big design influence and a very big storytelling influence.

[00:03:55] Like Courtney said, each property has its own story and there's some beautiful [00:04:00] properties there and some of them smaller, some of them bigger, like you said your full mix of all that and that's a really cool thing.

[00:04:05] I think one of the things that struck me in the first conversation we had was the video production stuff and talking to other real estate people across the nation, people Midwest to the east coast and the video part they haven't even touched on.

[00:04:19] Go into a little bit more depth on what you guys are doing with video production. I know you're on some shows and things like that.

Let real estate people know what you're doing with video production and network tv

[00:04:24] **Courtney Poulos:** I've been blessed. I had a TV show on FYI network a few years ago. I've been on million-dollar listing being in LA it's hard to avoid getting pitched for shows for sure. A lot of our agents have done shows too, like house hunters and those kinds of things.

[00:04:38] For me, I have an issue with reality TV around real estate because it shows a very contrived piece of it.

[00:04:48] It doesn't go into lending. It doesn't go into real relatable scenarios and the job of real estate. On some level, our content is around, now, the job of real estate. People can hear how conversations are being done.

[00:05:04] Our podcast has video component to it. We've also been shooting cinematic pieces around breakup with your rental, which is a book I wrote a couple of years ago.

[00:05:15] It's still very relevant, but the idea of breakup with your rental, for single women, especially to acknowledge that financial independence can help them make better life choices and starting young is the way to go. You don't have to wait for the white picket fence. You don't have to wait for the perfect man.

[00:05:33] You can get started ASAP. Like right now, the time is always now when it comes to real estate.

[00:05:41] That book has a lot of my personal story in it. I came from a family that didn't own and there was no prospect of owning. There was no financial literacy. Like my great grandparents were farmers and my grandparents owned a shop and was a bus driver.

[00:05:55] It was like very blue collar and agricultural but when it came to me, I had [00:06:00] bigger dreams and I wanted to live in a bigger place, and I wanted to have more dynamic and stability than what that life can afford people.

[00:06:11] How do you do that? It was always a great source of stress for me, I started working when I was 12, but like from 12 to 30, how am I going to make something out of nothing?

[00:06:21] Real estate really does that at any price point. Even if you can't afford to buy where you live, buying where you can, when you can, allows you the opportunity to have an appreciating asset and, tax benefits and all of those things.

[00:06:34] All that information that I absorbed through trial and error, I put into the book and really started to visually explain those things in short cinematic clips, which are also on the YouTube channel for people to see and those have been very successful.

[00:06:52] I think people feel inspired by the idea that they can do this and that is a key piece of our ethos at ACME.

[00:06:58] **Joey Myers:** I love that, and I come from a similar background too, and have a similar entrepreneurial bug.

[00:07:03] I got friends that are the same way and I think that's great, just because some of the other things we'll probably talk about here in a moment of what you guys are doing, especially on the nonprofit side and all that. I think drivers like yourself and others, like you are what I think our market really needs right now.

[00:07:19] For those that are looking at what you've done, was it school? Was it more of a passionate curiosity to learn? What was it that gave you the skills to get you to where you're at now? Was it more like you said, trial and error or school of hard knocks?

What was it that gave you the skills to get you to where you're at now?

[00:07:32] **Courtney Poulos:** Like I said, I've been working since I was 12. When I was 12, I was busing tables. I worked at a candy shop. When I was in college, I had three jobs. I worked at a reggae record label. I worked in marketing. I worked in promotion. I worked in PR. I worked as a waitress. I worked as an assistant. I worked so many jobs over the course of my life, where I had to interact with people on so many different levels.

[00:07:56] It humbles you. It creates a customer service mindset as [00:08:00] well. Like not coming from money can be limiting mentally. If you don't pursue alternate ways of thinking about money, but the one thing that being humble has given to me is that service mentality that carries through to everything that we do.

[00:08:18] In all the things that we are doing real estate wise, we are trying to contribute back to other people to help open other people's mind and ultimately change other people's lives. For me, I was sick of suffering. I was sick of feeling like I deserved to have a better quality of life and I didn't know how to do it and it was frustrating to me.

[00:08:35] My very last job before I got my real estate license was working for the federal government. I was at a subcontractor, and I was making \$37,000 a year and I had to work nine-hour days with a mandatory lunch break. We had mandatory resources meetings.

[00:08:52] It was like, there was so much inefficiency. It was like mandatory inefficiency. In fact, at one point my supervisor came over to my desk and said, Courtney, you're working too quickly. You need to slow down so we can build the government more hours and that's so contradictory to the way that I am, I work.

[00:09:11] For me that was a major red flag. I'm like, I can't do this. This is soul sucking. Binge alcohol drinking, inducing work and I don't want to do that. So where can I get all my needs met and that's where real estate really is incredible because it's there for you if you're a narcissist, right?

[00:09:29] You get to see your picture on the billboard. You get to get all the glory at the end of the deal, but it's also there for you if you've really cared about helping people achieve their dreams. It serves like cycle and there are certain people who really thrive on that. I think that we're glamorized narcissistic customer service specialists in a way.

[00:09:47] It works to the benefit of our clients that we want, that we want to do such a good job that we get glory, so it's a self-serving cycle, but it gives you all these things. All my jobs have come together in [00:10:00] one. ACME is a marketing firm, and we market product, and our product is our service and the houses, but the way we do it is just intentional

[00:10:09] **Joey Myers:** I agree. I was on a podcast early with Ray Ellen he's out in Arkansas and pixel properties.com is his company. He was saying something similar. He's a marketing guy too and real estate. He describes a real estate industry as you're a marketing person first, and then real estate is second.

[00:10:24] It's similar where the product is real estate, but you got the marketing is where you must put a lot of your energy into if you want to promote properties, or if you want to pull buyers in for those properties, things like that.

[00:10:34] Go into a little bit of the nonprofit stuff I really like that about you. I think that makes ACME real estate unique. Where again, you're not just selling million-dollar properties or, that kind of thing, but you got some cool projects that are going on the side that are related to the real estate world.

What side projects are you working on right now that relate to real estate?

[00:10:50] **Courtney Poulos:** I think you're referring to our scholarship program, right?

[00:10:53] **Joey Myers:** Yeah.

[00:10:53] **Courtney Poulos:** A few years ago, we had a, I would say unsavory experience with people who were really upset with changes that were happening to their neighborhood in east LA. So just to be explicit, my seller was a Mexican developer who was selling a house he built from scratch in the neighborhood.

[00:11:19] It was a vacant lot. There was no house on it. No one had to move out. It wasn't even a flip. It was a built from scratch home by a member of the community and still, it felt like we were at the end of a sword of people who are feeling very much displaced by real estate investors and transforming neighborhoods where now they're priced out of partaking in some of the housing that's in that area and people are feeling displaced.

[00:11:46] I listened, we were getting a barrage of messages and it hurt me, because I'm sensitive to my own struggle. Look, I'm starting to cry, but the truth, it matters.

[00:12:00] Where you live matters.

[00:12:01] Sorry.

[00:12:01] **Joey Myers:** That's okay.

[00:12:02] **Courtney Poulos:** I didn't know I was going to get emotional

[00:12:04] **Joey Myers:** It's a great thing that you're doing, so I want you to share.

[00:12:06] **Courtney Poulos:** It affected me, and it affected us, and we were like, how can we pull more people in because maybe people can't afford to go to college.

[00:12:14] Maybe they go to college and then they come back to LA and there's no job for them here. So how can we pull in people who understand or want to understand real estate as a career that doesn't require you to spend 10 years making \$37,000 a year to have a life and a career and change your family's life.

[00:12:34] We wanted more representation in the neighborhoods that we serve and here's another thing that's important for us. Yes, we sell real estate. If a flipper comes to us and says, hey, we have a house for you to sell. That's how we make our money, of course but we are also advocates for home ownership and financial literacy and education.

[00:12:52] What we're seeing that makes us angry is that there are a lot of people who don't know the true value of their home and they're being robbed. There are people who come into neighborhoods that have fought historically to exist and have created an economy that is culturally supportive.

[00:13:07] Now they're seeing out of area investors and people come in and change the color of the neighborhood and I don't mean race. The feeling, the respect, even people putting up fences and not understanding their neighbors or talking to their neighbors and it's changing dynamics.

[00:13:22] In a way that's really making people upset. I feel like the key piece and all of that is representation not ironically, since we are agents. I feel like if people have representatives in their neighborhoods and can get in the ground and really like communicate, you can do this.

[00:13:39] You guys want to buy this duplex you can rent to whoever you want. You can own this thing. It's appreciating, you can participate in the economic growth of the neighborhood and not be displaced. It's ownership that creates a hedge against displacement.

[00:13:53] Whether you must pull money together, three people must pull their money together to do it. It's what I had to do when I bought my first place. [00:14:00] It wasn't three people, it was two people, but still, like we aren't all independently wealthy, but there is a way to do it and there are programs to help.

[00:14:06] In some, what we thought of to do that is to create a scholarship program where ACME pays for real estate salesperson education, training, licensing fees, exam fees, professional membership fees, and all the startup costs associated with becoming an active real estate salesperson and creating a cadre of people who are representatives from the neighborhoods that feel unrepresented so we can get more people to stay in their homes or buy more investment property in the areas where they want to have more of a say, how things are going down.

[00:14:41] **Joey Myers:** I agree.

[00:14:42] Like you said, there's an educational loop. There are things that I know you probably thought I've thought that they should be teaching in school that they're not teaching in school.

With the state of things in southern California, what do you feel needs to change?

[00:14:49] **Courtney Poulos:** Who wins? Who wins if they don't teach it in school.

[00:14:51] **Joey Myers:** Exactly.

[00:14:52] **Courtney Poulos:** You know what I learned last week on my podcast? Rents go up during inflationary and recessionary periods, rents go up. So who wins? Landlords win. But ironically in Los Angeles with this eviction moratorium that they keep extending, there are people literally on the brink of losing their homes because they can't force their tenants to pay rent.

[00:15:11] Even though we all know that COVID is not knocking people out of their jobs right now. There's this suspension of reality. So then in that scenario, I'm like, who wins? There are governmental powers who want to keep all this extra power that they got during COVID and want to extend that power if they possibly can.

[00:15:29] Working against the individual Homeowners who have small investment properties or whatever. Then on the larger scale, the people who can afford the big corporations who own big blocks of apartment buildings, who can afford to get through an eviction moratorium with people not paying rent and that kind of thing, their rents are going up, across the country.

[00:15:47] They're making their money; they're going to be fine. You must ask yourself in all of this, who is winning?

[00:15:52] **Joey Myers:** You must look too. Some people are going to hear this, not in California and we're in the central part of California. We're probably not [00:16:00] seeing as much, but we're seeing quite a bit of vagrancy and it just seems like it's blooming all over the place.

[00:16:05] I've seen LA, I've seen video, I've seen San Francisco and it's bad.

[00:16:10] **Courtney Poulos:** There are literally like homeless people with weapons, shooting at cops on the corner of Beverly and La Brea, there are people attacking like Olympians with freaking bats. It's scary. They're closing the Starbucks at Hollywood and Vine.

[00:16:24] It's bad if Starbucks doesn't want that money

[00:16:27] **Joey Myers:** Didn't they just close in, was it in San Francisco? I just saw a report that they're closing eight Starbucks in San Francisco.

[00:16:33] **Courtney Poulos:** 60 total, Newsom needs to pay attention and so do our mayors. What's happening in LA is unsustainable and, but that problem is not about homelessness, they are homeless, but there's a lot more going on there.

[00:16:48] My understanding is that there are plenty of places in Los Angeles that are four people who are homeless to stay or get clean, get a meal, take a bath, whatever shower probably, but you know what I'm saying?

[00:16:58] Clean up, but you must be clean to take advantage.

[00:17:04] **Joey Myers:** You got to be off drugs.

[00:17:05] **Courtney Poulos:** People want to be, and then there's mental health issues going on too. Some drugs the tweakers are on drugs that cause schizophrenia. We're literally walking around in a zombie land sometimes it's freaking scary.

[00:17:17] **Joey Myers:** Crazy.

[00:17:18] **Courtney Poulos:** That doesn't help real estate values.

[00:17:19] **Joey Myers:** No, it doesn't. That would be cool to have a podcast just about that would be a very interesting podcast.

[00:17:24] **Courtney Poulos:** Who wins.

[00:17:25] **Joey Myers:** I know, exactly. You must ask questions and I think that's what we need more of people, especially in the real estate industry, like yourself asking questions and using their brain, critical thinking discernment about what's going on, what they see going on and how to turn it around.

[00:17:39] Like you said, representatives, I think that's great in certain areas that you're giving scholarships to kids, older, they got to obviously be 18 plus or whatever to become an agent. But getting younger people involved in that and even older people, it's up for 30, 40, 50-year-olds too, that want to maybe restart what they're doing.

[00:17:55] I love that about what you guys are doing. I know we're slim on time, so I want to be respectful of your time, but I did want to [00:18:00] talk lead generation strategies podcast. I wanted to talk a little lead generation.

[00:18:04] I think that gives people a good idea of what you guys is doing and what you're about. Typically, your clients, how do they typically connect with you?

How do future clients typically connect with you?

[00:18:09] **Courtney Poulos:** You must diversify your lead generation of course you don't want to lean too hard in on one thing.

[00:18:15] One of the things I've done successfully in the past is I advertise where they aren't. When people stopped sending out postcards, I started sending out postcards.

[00:18:25] **Joey Myers:** Good point.

[00:18:25] **Courtney Poulos:** When people stopped advertising on bus bench ads, I started advertising on bus bench ads. There was a moment there where everybody went to online marketing and then there was no tactile marketing.

[00:18:35] I'm like, this is a great opportunity. I tend to try and find some space that I can stand out in, but I'll be a hundred percent honest with you. Social media, for most of my agents has been the number one lead generation, like cold lead generations source. I like that because it's better than just seeing a static website and clicking on somebody randomly.

[00:18:55] It's you get to feel like, somebody before you call them. It takes a cold lead into warm lead space. If you're giving people, the right kind of feel. The success of my agents who have really been successful in that is usually because they're focusing on either a particular area or a particular style of home, something for which they are the specialist.

[00:19:18] I think a mistake a lot of realtors make with social media is, and by the way, my personal social media is not where I have put all my energy. I put it all into the ACME social media. My personal social media is nothing special really.

[00:19:30] It's just little bits and things from my life but our ACME social media is really where all the intentional marketing is, and for us it's been very successful creating like reputations for individual agents by virtue of their specialization. That's what you can't find anymore.

[00:19:51] A lot of people just throw things out or every agent wants to be a specialist on something that's not useful to buyers or sellers. I see a lot of like [00:20:00] agents doing like agent coaching, or I don't even understand the purpose, but if you took a marketing class, when you're in college, probably you remember that one of the very first things that you must do is you have to evaluate the outcome that you're trying to achieve with your program.

[00:20:15] What message am I sending right now? I ask, who wins in this situation, that's funneling to me. Usually, it leads me to the right answer. I ask myself, why am I doing this? When before I do anything, like what is the message I'm sending?

[00:20:29] Who's my audience? What else do they like, why am I saying these things? Why am I dancing with my dog right now on social media? Is that saying something? Am I trying to let people know I have a dog? Or so sometimes social media gets lost in the muckety muck for agents, because we're throwing everything at the wall.

[00:20:45] We don't know what's going to stick, but my most successful agents chose a thing, paid attention to the metrics and then tweak it and keep working a particular angle and then they fly.

[00:20:58] **Joey Myers:** Any particular social media outlet that is hot?

Any particular social media outlet that is hot right now?

[00:21:02] **Courtney Poulos:** Instagram is what we've had, like reels but I do know that there are some agents who are saying TikTok is really the spot. I know that my son, for example, he doesn't look at Instagram. He's 13 though. But I'm just saying the younger people they're really like obsessed with TikTok and don't even look at Instagram.

[00:21:16] Instagram's becoming the new Facebook and all the people who don't look at Facebook anymore are, I don't know what they're doing.

[00:21:22] **Joey Myers:** The old farts.

[00:21:23] **Courtney Poulos:** I still like Facebook.

[00:21:24] **Joey Myers:** Me too.

[00:21:25] **Courtney Poulos:** I still got pictures of me from second grade that I can see every now and again, which is fun, but I will say that for effective visual marketing, which is what we're doing, especially in a post COVID real estate world, 85% of buyers are finding their properties online.

[00:21:37] We have to deliver something for them to look at in order to collect their eyes and the other thing that I do is not just train the agents on how to generate leads, but it's also on what to do with them once you get them, which is a different skillset.

[00:21:52] **Joey Myers:** The sales side of things.

[00:21:54] **Courtney Poulos:** It's also like the non-retail side of things. If you have people coming to real [00:22:00] estate from other industries where they asked a lot of Can I help you with that? Or do you have any questions or, that kind of thing. It's a lot of, I'm just looking, no. It leaves a lot to chance and buyers are used to being sold.

[00:22:16] They walk into open houses, not even wanting to engage with the agent that's there. A large part of what we do at ACME is training our agents on how to engage in a non-threatening, but ultimately very competent way with people who don't know what they don't know about the buying process.

[00:22:34] That results in a higher closing rate for just people who walk in.

[00:22:37] **Joey Myers:** Because you're warming them up

[00:22:38] **Courtney Poulos:** It's also I don't need to be so friendly. It's not, I think somebody from Keller Williams once said people work with people they like and I'm like, I don't think that's true.

[00:22:47] I think people work with people who they think no more than them about a particular thing and I always use this, if I was going to get a boob job, I'm not going to go to the discount doctor, some random, like in the alley boob job guy, because he is cheap. I want a doctor who has great results and hopefully good bedside manner.

[00:23:05] Think that's more realistic. How realistically, how buyers and sellers choose their real estate representation. They want results and competency. All these things that people do to be so nice and so accommodating. They don't always result in closings.

[00:23:20] **Joey Myers:** The cookie scented candles. Although those are good, and they help.

[00:23:24] **Courtney Poulos:** I like some of those, the nontoxic.

[00:23:25] **Joey Myers:** I see you guys have some candles and you got all kinds of cool stuff in your store, on your site.

[00:23:30] **Courtney Poulos:** We do, we launch a sportswear line. We have ACME hoodies and sweatpants, and we've done several candle collaborations.

[00:23:38] One with AIA and that's the black candle with the gold writing on it's amazing. You can order that on our website. But we also did a partnership with Heretic and those are the ones that are famous for doing their partnership with Gwyneth Paltrow's this candle smells like my vagina or something.

[00:23:56] They're very cheeky. You can't watch their Instagram [00:24:00] unless you have a--

[00:24:00] **Joey Myers:** Earmuffs and eye muffs and stuff.

[00:24:02] **Courtney Poulos:** Exactly. But all that to say their candles are amazing and that was another awesome partnership that we did.

What sets your company apart from any other real estate agency?

[00:24:09] We have a waterline, like a unique water bottle line that we've had out for couple of years. I think we're going to change gears and try something new in the beverage department but yeah, we really are a lifestyle brand. We try to find things that integrate our sensibilities with the properties that we sell in the neighborhoods we sell.

[00:24:33] I've been to a lot of meetings. I've been to a lot of conferences, and I hear a lot of people talking about the things that they do in their communities that are visibility related things. One of the intentional things that we've done in Appian, I don't know if it's going to result in leads.

[00:24:51] I don't know if it's going to result in whatever, but we made a really committed effort to interview community leaders about what's going on and get a little deeper than the puppy fair or then these Nonsense things that people post banners for, but really getting into it.

[00:25:11] I host American dream this season two. Cal American dream men, in this season I've had the opportunity to interview big U who is the like OG kind of guy in LA in the music industry, but he's also got developing options, which is an organization that helps kids stay off the streets, gang intervention, that kind of thing, and supports their sports careers from a very young age.

[00:25:33] They also partnered with us on the scholarship. We've had such a great interaction with the developing options team and that's real work, and we've also interviewed business owners, restaurant owners, the Lanark Park jazz festival, executive producer with last month's interview.

[00:25:50] I'm really enjoying getting to know what's going on right now in a deeper way to see where ACME can be of service. This is something that I think you must continue [00:26:00] to do. To wrap this up in one way, lead generation related, I think the most important thing is to not fall for the idea that there's this easy way to just get high quality leads without any effort.

[00:26:16] You're not going to get them through paying for them. What is a high-quality lead is somebody who chooses you because you've shown them who you are, and that aligns with their values. As a brand, we've shown our clients, what our design sensibility is, how we market, how we sell and what we believe is important to the communities that we serve and how we want to contribute to that.

[00:26:40] I think that's the highest quality lead generation tool we could have, is like finding your sense of self as an agent or as a brokerage and letting other people into your world.

[00:26:51] **Joey Myers:** I agree with that, and that's a great point because again going back to Ray Ellen earlier, he was saying the same thing. He's bearded up and he's got this big beard.

[00:26:58] I asked him what's your advice for other agents maybe starting out or whatever. He said, one of the questions he gets asked is, they'll say, can I just be me? Can I just do you type thing; you know?

[00:27:08] He said in the beginning you probably want to follow what successful agents do and blah, and then after a while, then you start to niche down and then you can, he goes, then you can grow your beard out.

[00:27:17] He goes, I show up to meetings in a t-shirt and board shorts and whatever. He goes, that might turn some people off and he goes, I'm okay with that because I may not mesh well with them anyway, relationally, but he goes, I got a lot of people that seek that out and he does a lot of podcasts.

[00:27:31] He does a lot of stuff, some of the media production stuff, he's pretty good at like you. He said they choose me because I am who I am. I'm open, I'm honest. I'm going to give them the straight up what the information is and so they like him.

[00:27:43] They'll do business with him regardless of what the heck he's wearing or, what kind of beard he's got or whatever.

[00:27:48] I agree. I think that's great advice. Maybe starting out, people maybe can't go as crazy.

For those starting out in real estate, how do you find who your “clients” are?

[00:27:53] **Courtney Poulos:** It's more than just I think when you're just starting out, you don't really know who your people are. When I first got my license, I [00:28:00] worked for a lady who was amazing named Poly Dressel.

[00:28:03] She was at the end of her career. She was planning to retire in like a couple years. I was her last assistant before she retired. She had a maternal nurturer vibe about her. A lot of the people that were her clients were like young families and people who really appreciated her maternal nurturing self.

[00:28:26] Then I'm this like, young, feisty ambitious, but I have no sales track record. I'm coming into it as her assistant. I noticed a lot of her clients didn't trust me with the heavier stuff, even though I was capable. They didn't see it. The same thing I'm not older than them.

[00:28:46] I'm not a nurturer. I am a nurturer, but I'm not a nurturer in that maternal way, the way that they were being treated by her at that time. I'm probably much more so now that I have a kid, but anyway, long story short of it is I had to find my people and my people were my peers and the people who I built my business with are people who I wanted me to speak directly, and they wanted to speak directly to me.

[00:29:07] There's an honesty and a kind of east coast reality check. Not Jersey Shore. It's not classless.

[00:29:16] **Joey Myers:** lol, I didn't mean that.

[00:29:16] **Courtney Poulos:** It's just honest. It's just honest. It's no bullshit. When I watch like reality television shows, I'm like, oh my God, that is such a bullshit.

[00:29:23] Maybe their life really is like that. But if my life was like that, I'd want to kill myself there's nothing like redeeming about that to me the way it's presented. Maybe there's a world where your buyer is sitting on a yacht and doesn't care about the money or something.

[00:29:37] That's not the world that I live in. You must find your people and then be yourself with, once you have established who your people are. You don't want to eliminate too many potential people before you have a track record to support that.

[00:29:50] I agree with what he said, and I feel like it's also geographic too. When I worked in DC, I had to cover my tattoo. But in LA I can have my tattoos. Florida, it's a mixed bag.

[00:29:59] **Joey Myers:** Interesting. I [00:30:00] was going to say Florida's probably a little bit different.

[00:30:02] **Courtney Poulos:** It's a little bit different, but I think it's not as foreign to have tattoos and be a real estate agent as it was. In DC it was like, I was like the purple monkey in the room.

[00:30:12] **Joey Myers:** Used to the polished, the monkey suit

[00:30:15] **Courtney Poulos:** They're like, yeah, they're wearing full blue Navy blue and black suits. Everybody's always dressed up. They go to the office dressed up, where in California, we're like in flip flops and jeans.

[00:30:24] I know an agent, personally, who has sold over a billion dollars in real estate, and he wears flip flops and shorts to every showing, so in LA, too, there are these like millionaires that could walk into your open house at any time, and they might not look like it. I have a crazy story if you have time for it.

[00:30:39] **Joey Myers:** Go for it and then we'll close up.

What's your best advice on how to treat prospective clients?

[00:30:42] **Courtney Poulos:** I tell all my agents to be aware how you treat people because you never know. I was hosting an open house and this homeless lady came to the front door and she had a wig on, it was like very like strong, dramatic. It had like trash in it. It was like, she smelled like urine.

[00:30:59] She was just Like really in a bad place, and she zeroed in on me and walked up to me and said, I need you to help me. I need you to help me. They're trying to get me out of my place. I'm just, I'm just like I need your help. I really know that I'm supposed to talk to you, and I'm like, okay, one second.

[00:31:16] I'm like, let's go outside. I can talk to you because I must sell this house right now, but I'm going to go outside. I'm going to talk to you for a second. I said, what's going on? She said these people, they're trying to kick me out of my house.

[00:31:27] She told me like this story, and she goes, can you come over tomorrow? I said, do you have a phone? She said, no, I don't have a phone. She gave me address and she said, please come over. Please come over tomorrow. I said, okay, I'll see what I can do but let's try and pick this back up after I do a little due diligence and I know where you are now, whatever.

[00:31:44] So she left, and I felt like, wow, that was intense. But one thing she told me was that her brother was this very famous baseball player. Okay. Which again, given the fact that, I'm not sure if it's true or not.

[00:31:57] But I'm going to give her the benefit of the doubt. [00:32:00] So believe it or not, that day, I'm driving home for the open house. I get an email update from MLS and it has the property address she gave to me on it.

[00:32:10] On the private marks, it says something like hard to show difficult tenants. Okay. I called the agent and I said, I think I just met one of your tenants.

[00:32:19] I think she came to my open house, and she said, her name was this. She said, this is the scenario, and she goes, oh no, she's the owner. I was like, oh, she's the owner and she's yep. She's the owner. She inherited this property. It was a million-dollar property. Okay.

[00:32:36] **Joey Myers:** Wow.

[00:32:37] **Courtney Poulos:** Yes. So obviously, because there was another agent involved, I couldn't do anything.

[00:32:42] But the lesson is. Never judge a book by its cover. Always give people the grace. Unless somebody's like personally threatening.

[00:32:49] **Joey Myers:** Your security first. You got to do diligence, like you said.

[00:32:52] **Courtney Poulos:** You just never know, and yeah, it turns out that she was the owner, and they were trying to liquidate the asset out from under her. So that was the pressure she was feeling. She legitimately was that very famous baseball player sister.

[00:33:03] **Joey Myers:** Wow. Interesting. That's crazy. Great story though.

[00:33:06] **Courtney Poulos:** You never know when your next lead's going to walk in or how they're going to be dressed.

[00:33:09] It's like the pretty woman thing. It's you got to treat people with respect and have something to contribute. Know who you are and what you have to offer and what your values are and let people see that, let that resonate with them.

[00:33:19] Have some consistency in what it is that you're saying and how you're being and how you're showing up in a marketing way online and people will find you, they will find you and they will want to work with you.

[00:33:30] You don't even have to chase.

[00:33:32] **Joey Myers:** That's great advice and it goes back to the old Zappos stories, the customer service getting phone calls about somebody just asking them, hey, can you order me a pizza? And they order a pizza for 'them, but that's not their business, but they did it anyway to go above and beyond.

[00:33:46] I don't know if you heard that story Zappos. Yeah. Back in the day when Zappos was growing and was getting big, so they had their credo and their company motto and all that stuff. They had some cool stuff. Since then, I think they've been acquired and I'm not quite sure what the story is with [00:34:00] them now, but they had a cool thing there.

[00:34:02] Yeah. Great advice Courtney.

[00:34:03] **Courtney Poulos:** Thank you.

[00:34:03] **Joey Myers:** Yeah. I want to be respectful of your time. Let's give people where they can find you, website, your stuff.

Where can people find you online?

[00:34:08] **Courtney Poulos:** Our podcast and video content is at [youtube.com/acme real estate](https://youtube.com/acme-real-estate). Our Instagram is at Acme real estate and my personal Instagram is at Courtney and Lala, but you can also find Acme Florida online, which we didn't really talk about.

[00:34:24] It's at www.acme-florida.com and LA is at acme-re.com. So just quickly, Florida is an incredible place, and our Orlando market is insane. I went there and I saw so much possibility and so much opportunity. It was a no brainer. I have family there. I have family here and I was going there quite a bit during COVID and really falling in love with it.

[00:34:49] The market and the opportunity and so many businesses, especially Californians have been moving to Florida. They need a new aesthetic for a lot of these properties. I'm a transformation brokerage. I found a talented broker on the ground who I'd known for a few years who saw Acme and really liked our branding.

[00:35:07] We decided to partner together. She's the broker on the ground there, I'm not the broker there. I'm just a co-founder and kind of visionary when it comes to marketing and direction and that kind of thing. But we just got off the ground, we started last year, and it's been incredible. We have an amazing team.

[00:35:23] So if anybody has Orlando referrals, we can take great care of you and of course, LA, we got you covered too.

[00:35:29] **Joey Myers:** I thought that was a smart move and yeah, we didn't get to talk about because there's so many cool stories that you have and so many cool things you're doing.

[00:35:34] I thought that was smart because the whole California immigration, EMI, all the Californians moving out, going to Florida, I was like, man, that's smart. You capture the people in California and then you can just find them a house in Florida and you go back and forth. I thought that was one of the smartest things to do.

[00:35:47] **Courtney Poulos:** Yeah, we've done that for a few people.

[00:35:49] Some of our most successful sales have been out of state investors who were referred by LA people to buy in Florida, so we sold a couple of properties
[00:36:00] for out of state investors, too.

[00:36:01] **Joey Myers:** What an interesting tint to the business model for some out there real estate people possibly same thing, they could be in Texas or find somebody in Texas that they can partner with, or Tennessee or Kentucky, or some of these ones where a lot of people met. Montana, where people are going out of California or New York or some of the crazy states. What an interesting tint that you can do on that business model with that.

[00:36:23] **Courtney Poulos:** You can really get quite a lot for your money and the houses aren't that old so foundation wise, structure wise, you're dealing with something a bit newer than what you're getting in LA generally and the cost of doing business, the state costs, and the concerns that we have here, a lot of them are not so prevalent there so there's a lot more opportunity.

[00:36:44] What I'm saying is there's a true middle class and you can serve true middle class. They're relatively affordably with good design.

[00:36:52] They want it.

[00:36:53] **Joey Myers:** That's what you were saying because you got the design-oriented mind and you were saying that over there in Florida, it's not quite there like it is obviously in LA and San Francisco.

[00:37:01] **Courtney Poulos:** People when they see it, they love it. But people aren't doing anything to their homes before they put them on the market, which is bizarre to me. Even getting people to stage is very challenging.

[00:37:09] It's a mind shift change. Oh, I must try and maybe I'm leaving money on the table if I don't.

[00:37:15] **Joey Myers:** Interesting. Interesting.

[00:37:15] Yeah. Appreciate your time, all great advice. Cool stories and that's why I wanted to have you on, Courtney.

[00:37:20] So thanks. Thanks for your time here today.

[00:37:23] **Courtney Poulos:** Thank you. Thank you. I've really enjoyed it. I've enjoyed our conversation.