



Richard W. Davidson

**EDITORS' NOTE** Rick Davidson was appointed to his current post in February 2010. He has served in franchise senior executive roles since 2006, and prior to this he was a franchise owner of a Realogy brand. Earlier, Davidson served in a dual capacity as Chief Operating Officer of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC and as President and Chief Operating Officer of Coldwell Banker Commercial Affiliates. He has held real estate broker licenses in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia and earned the SIOR designation in 2009. Previously, he was the Founding Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Coldwell Banker Commercial Capitol Realty Services. Davidson spent nine years as managing director of CB Richard Ellis in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan market and three years with Insignia/ESG as Executive Vice President. He currently serves as Chairman, Easter Seals International Board of Directors. He is an honors graduate of the College of Management and Business at National-Louis University.

**COMPANY BRIEF** Century 21 Real Estate ([century21.com](http://century21.com)) is the franchisor of the world's largest residential real estate franchise sales organization, comprised of approximately 6,900 independently owned and operated franchised broker offices in 75 countries and territories worldwide with more than 102,000 independent sales professionals. The CENTURY 21® System provides iconic brand marks, marketing, communications, and innovative technology solutions that help enable its franchisees and their independent agents to attract and engage prospects, nurture customers, and deliver a positive real estate transaction experience. Century 21 Real Estate LLC is a subsidiary of Realogy Holdings Corp.

### Has true recovery taken place in the real estate market and, if so, how strong has it been?

We're in the middle of the long-term housing recovery and the fact that we still have historically low interest rates, improving inventory levels, an improving job market, increasing consumer confidence, and good affordability rates – all bode well for a sustainable long-term recovery.

# Global Growth

## An Interview with Richard W. Davidson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Century 21 Real Estate LLC

### What makes this company so special?

As the CENTURY 21 global market position grows, the quality of our independent broker franchise network and affiliated sales professionals, and the services they provide, ensure that our brand continues to be identified with professionalism, honesty, integrity, and service. In August, we announced that CENTURY 21 Real Estate has been ranked highest in overall customer satisfaction by the J.D. Power 2014 Home Buyer/Seller Satisfaction Study<sup>SM</sup>. CENTURY 21 Real Estate swept the awards by receiving the highest ranking among national real estate companies across all four customer satisfaction segments in the study including: First-Time Home-Buyer Satisfaction, Repeat Home-Buyer Satisfaction, First-Time Home-Seller Satisfaction, and Repeat Home-Seller Satisfaction.

### How do you maintain consistent service and do you have metrics to help control it?

We have service awards for our sales professionals that are tied to the quality of customer satisfaction.

Apart from that, our reputation is earned and measured by the professionals we associate with. This includes our company owners, these franchises in local markets where we have offices, and it includes the 102,000 independent sales professionals that are part of our team.

We spend a lot of time making certain that the people who are part of this organization represent the brand and each other in a deserving and appropriate way.

### Have the type of people you need in sales changed?

The proliferation of technology has added an element to the industry. It has driven agents to focus on communicating with their customers in the way they want to be communicated with.

More than 90 percent of home searches now include online searches, and we provide our sales professionals with the tools necessary to connect with the consumer and serve the consumer's need.

This business is still all about supply and demand and buyers and sellers. It's all location-based. It's still part of the American dream.

So while the market is evolving rapidly because of the proliferation of technology, it's still a fundamentally based business.

### Is brick-and-mortar still important?

Technology has definitely impacted the need for the size and significance of brick-and-mortar locations.

We have seen a shift in the market moving from brick-and-mortar to a technology-based structure.

That said, having the ability to bring agents into a location where you can see them and get to know them helps to establish culture, which is critically important as part of moving a sales organization forward.

### How much of a focus have international opportunities been for CENTURY 21?

The international markets are a significant part of our current sales and our overall growth strategy. We have almost 7,000 offices located throughout the world, and we're in 75 countries and territories. We have nearly two times as many offices outside of the U.S. as we have inside. Last year, 43 percent of every closed real estate transaction that we completed was done outside the U.S. This sets us apart from our competition.

We have approximately 2,700 offices in the Asia-Pacific market alone with nearly 1,000 offices in China, 900 offices in Japan, 250 offices in Taiwan, and 150 offices in Hong Kong, and the list goes on.

In North America, we have over 300 offices in Canada, 125 offices in Mexico, and 2,300 in the U.S.

In September of last year, we launched [Century21global.com](http://Century21global.com). It's a unique site in that we have 30 countries around the world that represent a significant majority of the listings we have as a company that feed this site every day. We have well over 200,000 listings on this site, and they are exclusively CENTURY 21 listings. This site also provides for 16 language translations and 32 currency conversions.

### How critical is it to find local talent in these markets?

Understanding the local market and the way in which local business is done is critical to success in these markets.

CENTURY 21 has a master franchise structure whereby the leaders of these various countries are typically natives of those countries and are in-country doing business in that local marketplace. Periodically, we bring the global organization together as one.

### You're involved with Easter Seals International. Why is this work so important?

Easter Seals has been a philanthropic partner with CENTURY 21 for 35 years, so it is part of our DNA. I personally believe that you have to lead people to where you want them to be.

Easter Seals has local operators delivering the services in local markets, so our affiliates can get involved directly in their communities. ●