

Relationships, Collaboration and Skill

An Interview with Diane M. Ramirez,
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Halstead Real Estate

EDITORS' NOTE In 1973, Diane Ramirez began her real estate career and she has worked for Halstead since founding the firm with Clark Halstead in 1984.

FIRM BRIEF Halstead (halstead.com) is one of the largest and most innovative residential real estate brokerage firms in the New York metropolitan area. The firm has more than 1,400 sales and rental agents throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, the Hamptons, Hudson Valley, New Jersey, and Fairfield County, Connecticut. In 2001, Halstead joined the distinguished family of real estate-related companies owned by Terra Holdings.



Diane M. Ramirez

Will you discuss your strategic focus for Halstead as you look to the coming year?

Over the last two years, the real estate brokerage industry has faced heightened external pressures – this includes VC money disruption, the evolution of listing aggregators and a shifting political environment, especially in New York. Now more than ever, we are looking inward and focusing on continuously upping our game. We are leaning into the depth and breadth of our real estate expertise to support our agents and their businesses. Their success is our priority.

I've been in the business for a long time, and when change is afoot the pendulum always seems to swing far, but that is never where we ultimately end up. If you get caught up in reacting to the swing of it, you lose sight of what our business is really about – building relationships, getting deals done and guiding clients through some of their most important life decisions.

Has a heightened competitive environment changed the way Halstead is doing business?

It hasn't fundamentally changed our business and, if anything, it makes us stronger and a little sharper. I feel strongly that you shouldn't change your stripes, just make them bolder.

What are you doing differently?

We have been investing heavily in technology and marketing over the past few years and will continue to do so. The results have been extremely positive for us. Our parent company, Terra Holdings, developed reSOURCE, an industry-leading, proprietary tech platform that

has greatly increased agent efficiency and their access to the best possible data and analytics. We released the second generation of reSOURCE to our agents earlier this year and it just keeps getting better.

Halstead also conducted a major brand transformation in the spring of 2018 which has been incredibly well-received by our agents and the broader community. I'm proud to say that this year, our rebrand as well as our marketing and technology investments earned us the coveted "Most

Innovative Brokerage" award by Leading Real Estate Companies of the World, the premier network of nearly 600 of the world's market-leading independent brokerage firms. It is the third time in five years that Halstead has been honored with this distinction, and I couldn't be more thrilled.

in new technology and maintaining our culture as we scale. I'm proud to say that we have built an internal foundation of incredible technology, marketing services and support companies without forgetting our mission as a real estate company based on relationships, collaboration and skill. Our agents know we always have their futures and best interests in mind.

Will you highlight some of the more culture-focused initiatives you're working on?

One initiative that has resonated with many of our top-producing agents is a regular Agent Forum series that gives groups of agents the opportunity to collaborate, share best practices and learn from one another in an intimate setting. These sessions are illustrative of what Halstead is all about – supporting each other in mutual growth.

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How do your strategic partnerships fit into the mix?

At the foundation of our brand has always been a commitment to thinking outside the box. In this spirit, we have embraced the power of partnerships through exclusive relationships with brands like the New York Yankees, Brooklyn Nets, and Audi to name a few. We've done some incredible cross-marketing promotion which has extended Halstead's reach and brand awareness in exciting ways. It's been an excellent agent retention and recruitment tool as well. We can't wait to continue to build on this in the coming year.

How do you maintain Halstead's culture as you grow and evolve?

It's about finding a balance. At Halstead, we are committed to continuously investing

We've also recently launched an exciting and far-reaching partnership with MNDFL, a popular NYC-based meditation company, to offer a variety of wellness opportunities for our agents aimed to support health, focus, productivity, and community building. It's an important foundation for the success of their businesses.

What is your advice to someone looking to enter the real estate business?

Have a long-term game plan. Real estate is a commission-based business and some agents, including many of those who are brand new to the industry, believe that a big deal is right around the corner. The truth is that the key to your success is the hard work involved in executing your plan. It can often take years to build your business, so you must be driven by a real fire in your belly. ●