



Q&A

Changing things up

Making the leap from accounting to an operational support role at specialist buyers' agency Aus Property Professionals has allowed Renee Edge to apply her career experience in new and creative ways to help people achieve their property goals.

How long have you been in the real estate industry?

I started my real estate career in 2017. I'd been working as a Chartered Accountant with large multinational companies for a number of years. But I found I was just turning up, doing the work and then going home. There wasn't much satisfaction. I was frustrated by the lack of variety in the work I was doing. I realised it wasn't the direction I wanted my career, and indeed my life, to go in and asked myself "where do I want to be in five, 10, 20 years from now?" I knew it was time to make a change.

So why real estate?

My partner and I had experienced some success with our own property portfolio and, drawing on my background in economics and accounting, I knew I could make a difference by helping people achieve their financial and lifestyle goals around property. So I made the move to real estate and haven't looked back.

To be honest, working in the real estate industry wasn't something I ever really aspired to. I'd always associated real estate with sales agents, and my personality isn't suited to that sort of sales role. But when I realised I could leverage my experience as a Chartered Accountant and work in a buyers' agency, I thought "yes, this is something I really want to do". I knew I'd enjoy the research side of things, as well as helping clients set and achieve financial goals around property.

What does your operational support role involve?

It's incredibly diverse and every day there's a new challenge. I work on everything from research and due diligence for properties we're looking at for clients to marketing and social media. I also liaise closely with the buyers' agents in our business, as well as the many external stakeholders we work with such as mortgage brokers and builders.

Aus Property Professionals is a small business and, because of my career background, I'm fortunate to be able to have input into a wide range of business activities. If I've read about an innovation or think of a new idea that I think we can adapt into the agency, I know my voice will be heard. That's really satisfying.

For example, there's a lot of misinformation around at the moment about the state of the market. But it's definitely not all doom and gloom. So I started thinking about ways we can get the right information into the marketplace to combat the scaremongering. We're now in the process of putting together a series of videos and webinars to explain what's going on and everything we're saying is backed by solid research and data. This will also position us as knowledge leaders and the go-to people for the right information and advice.

How does your previous career experience help you in your current role?

When I was with Ernst & Young, my role was as an external auditor. Dealing with lots of different people all the time meant I always had to provide exceptional customer service and act in a professional manner. Then at Dyson Australia I was involved in financial reporting, so I have an in-depth understanding of profit and loss, cashflow, financial targets etc. This all gives me a really solid foundation to draw upon when I'm working with the buyers' agents in our agency, as well as clients. I'm able to do all the background research on a property and determine its profitability, and then pass a comprehensive analysis on to the buyers' agents to present to their clients.

Who do you look to for inspiration and why?

I'm inspired by Australian women who are entrepreneurs. Women who have built their own empires through sheer hard work and dedication. RedBalloon's Naomi Simson and Kayla Itsines,



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the personal trainer who has leveraged her passion for health and fitness into a multimillion-dollar business, come to mind.

These women have followed their passion and I believe that if you're passionate about something, you're always going to succeed. For me, that passion is helping people – helping a person buy their first home or getting a great deal for someone who thought they couldn't afford an investment property. I'm inspired by people who want to change and then actively take steps to make that change. Being able to be on that journey with someone and see where they are now compared to where they started is really inspirational.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Knowing that every day will bring a new challenge. I'm a problem solver by nature and love thinking creatively. Whether it's developing a new process or working out a way to present information to clients in a different way, I enjoy stretching myself and learning new things, as well as helping others.

What's been the highlight of your career so far?

Definitely winning the REINSW Award for Excellence for Operational Support last year. I was completely stoked.

I still consider myself a real estate newbie, but I've worked tirelessly to develop my industry knowledge. Receiving the award reinforced that I made the right decision to change careers. It really meant a lot.

What are your goals for the next 12 months?

High on my list is to develop and implement an innovative marketing campaign for our agency – something that's different and hasn't been seen before. I want to not only increase awareness of Aus Property Professionals, but also educate people about what buyers' agents do and the value they add. It's not just about finding a property for someone. It's much more than that. It's about looking at investment strategies, building portfolios, achieving financial goals and much more.

I also want to develop a strong onboarding program for new team members. Our agency is growing and I want to ensure the process is seamless.

And my husband and I are expecting our first child in April, so that will definitely be a milestone!

How do you spend your time when you're not at work?

I play the clarinet and work as a casual musician in a professional concert band, which I love.

I'm also very much into health and fitness, so I enjoy yoga, going to the gym and taking the dog for a walk. Very soon, though, there'll be a little one taking up lots of time.

Is there a phrase you live by?

"You'll never get ahead by standing still."

It's not always about going forward. Sometimes you need to go backwards or sideways to ultimately head in the right direction. But if you want to progress, you can't just stand still. It's better to do something than nothing. ♦