



## The Top Players In Chicago Real Estate: Melanie Stone

*Learn how ongoing education and a carefully-curated social media presence helps Stone stand out from the pack.*

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In the often rough and tumble world of Chicago real estate, where inventory is tight and the margins thin, it takes a certain toughness and savvy to make it in the industry. And while Melanie Stone might be young, the award-winning agent's success and experience belies her youthful energy. Stone was recently named to Realtor Magazine's national "30 Under 30" list, is a member of Coldwell Banker's International Diamond Society, served on the board of directors for the Women's Council of Realtors, and currently ranks in the top 2% of agents in Chicago.

ESTATENVY recently caught up with Stone to learn what fuels her success and keeps her on

top of the Chicago real estate pyramid.

How did you get started in real estate?

I was studying journalism at DePaul University, and after I didn't land the summer internship I wanted, I decided that I was going to quit writing and pick a new career (mature, right?). Real estate was a shot in the dark. My dad, a longtime business owner, suggested I get my real estate license once I turned 21. So I did, and the rest is history!

To what do you attribute your success?

My faith is so important to me. Jesus is my "secret sauce," and without Him I could not survive this industry. I'm also forever grateful for the support I have from my family, friends, clients, mentors and brokerage. How do you make yourself stand out to potential clients?

I'm all about education. I teach a class called "So You Want to Buy a Condo," and from that, I meet a lot of potential clients. I think people decide to work with me because they are impressed by my accolades and experience, but also because they feel like I'm knowledgeable. I also love social media and blogging, so that stuff definitely draws clients in. What is the key to closing deals in the real estate industry?

That's a loaded question! If you're buying, be quick. Be the first to see a place and the first to write an offer. If you're selling, price it right and the buyers will come running. It's important to communicate with the other agent (with kindness!) and get the best possible terms for your client. What trends do you see in the market right now?

A trend I've noticed is that buyers want to see less and less properties IRL. Most of them have already done a ton of online shopping via Redfin or Zillow, so by the time they get to me, they know exactly what they want. What excites you about the future of real estate?

I really love all things digital, so I'm encouraged by the way the industry has become more tech-savvy, from DotLoop to a more modern MLS. Why is Chicago a good place to work in real estate?

Condos, condos, condos! There are so many of them (more than enough to go around). Inventory is tight, yes, but with so much vertical construction, there is a lot of opportunities for agents to get listings. What's the hottest neighborhood in Chicago, or the Chicago suburbs right now?

Fulton Market. What tip should buyers/sellers keep in mind when working with an agent that they might not already know?

Read reviews! That's the best way to learn about the person you are working with. The same is true for lenders, attorneys and inspectors. Who is your real estate idol?

Barbara Corcoran. You can listen to her story [here](#)! Also, I'm slightly obsessed with The Corcoran Group's [insta stories](#). Do you utilize social media to enhance your business? If so, how?

YES. I spend way too much time editing photos and writing captions (they must be perfect!) for social media. [My generation is all about Instagram, so I am on there a lot](#). I use it to give people a glimpse into my personal life and my real estate career.

[instagram.com/melaniestonechi](https://www.instagram.com/melaniestonechi)

[facebook.com/melaniestonechicago](https://www.facebook.com/melaniestonechicago)

What advice would you give new agents?

Lean on your friends and family for support. My friends help me with almost every aspect of my business, from sending out mailers to taking gorgeous photos for social media. My family encourages me endlessly. Real estate is such a tough industry, and it helps to have people in your corner to lift you up when things seem bleak.