



Epoch Chicago Chief Business Development Officer Stephanie Spenner Talks About Her Quick Rise To The Top Of The Real Estate Industry

Find out how the Milwaukee native became an expert on the Chicago market and continues to make a name for herself in one of the top real estate markets in the country.

Elliot Grandia
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In the first few years out of college, most young professionals are just getting their feet wet, trying to build on their educational and internship experience. Stephanie Spenner, however, is leaps and bounds ahead when it comes to the real estate industry. She has quickly risen to the top, now leading the way for other leasing agents in the Chicago area as Chief Business Development Officer at Epoch Chicago. She sat down with us to discuss her path to success in the home industry.

1. How did you get started in real estate? I got my start in real estate when I was a freshman in college in Milwaukee. I got hired on as an agent for a property management and leasing company and I loved it. I truly got lucky to find my passion at such a young age. A lot of people are searching for their calling well into their 30's and I was 19. When I graduated I saw the Marquee at Block 37 was being built in Chicago. I emailed HR and told them about my passion and experience, and was offered an interview. I moved to Chicago in February 2017 and started working shortly thereafter. I have people that say I know the city better than they do, and I've only been here 18 months. I know every neighborhood inside and out and I love learning about the new developments.

2. How do you stay motivated?

Honestly, it's just in me. I have a fire and a passion for real estate in me. A lot of people want to get into real estate and they learn it's just not a good fit. I'll admit, it's a grind and you have to work your butt off. Some clients are great, while others are your best friends. Not every client is right for you, but when I do have a client that is happy to find their dream home because of work I've done for them, it makes it all worth it. Wanting to be the best broker in the city also pushes me to be better.

3. Do you have any advice for up and comers in real estate?

There are so many different aspects. There is residential, commercial, development, broker, appraiser and the list goes on. Find your niche. Find what is the most interesting for you. Talk with people and pick their brains about the industry. Find out the pros and cons and what it takes to be successful. Having a mentor, I'd say, is the top advice I'd give to an up and comer. I'd also say if you are talking residential real estate, [start] onsite in property management like I did. You get to know big heads in the industry while having a salary and commission. Now I only get commission. You are your own business as a broker. 4. Is there a real estate agent that you look to for inspiration?

My business partner Aaron Gill is someone I look to for inspiration. He's the managing broker at Epoch. He shows up everyday, meaning he is fully engaged and [understands his clients'] needs. He is very professional, always dressing the best. He also believes in his team and encourages us to keep reaching higher and to never be satisfied. 5. How do you spread the word about your business? I am a very social and outgoing person. I love talking real estate. Every chance I got to go to events and talk with anyone and everyone, I take it. Being polite to everyone you see and making a connection, big or small, is huge. I want everyone to know my name and remember me. I take advantage of every opportunity I can. I think face-to-face interaction is key for my business too. It shows them you care and helps get people on board.

6. What is the biggest challenge your industry is currently facing?

Right now residents aren't sure if they should rent or buy with the market constantly fluctuating. I handle mainly rental and leaseings, and people always think that a decent rental will be out of their price range. Showing people the options available, and what they can get for the best bang for their buck, can be challenging. The market is also very saturated, so there is a

lot of competition trying to get renters to choose them.

7. What's exciting about the future of this industry?

There is so much new construction going up in Chicago. Every corner has a crane it seems, so I would say [the future of the industry is] all the new developments around the city. I get to know the developers and love learning about the building details. I love touring the property before anyone can and getting the first go at selling the properties.

8. What are some trends you are seeing in real estate for 2019?

I think micro-units are on the rise, or at least will gain in popularity. It's another way for developers to allow more people to live in a location that may have thought was out of their price range. A micro unit basically like a studio, but even smaller in some cases. It's designed to have a seating area, a sleeping space and a bathroom/ kitchenette. They are making a lot of them in River North, so people that thought the neighborhood was too pricey can now afford to live around there. 9. Where can people find you? (i.e. website and social media)

@stephanie_Spinner. [Liveyoureepoch.com](http://liveyoureepoch.com)