

# Women Leaders of Real Estate: “Focus on Relationships” with Jewel McDonald of JM Real Estate Inc



Never be selfish and don't burn bridges. Also, focus on relationships because the real estate industry is very relationship oriented. Treat others with respect and encourage co-brokerage opportunities.

**As** a part of my series about strong women leaders of the Real Estate industry, I had the pleasure of interviewing Jewel McDonald.

*Jewel McDonald, CPM®, CCIM, is the broker/director of Brokerage Services for JM Real Estate, Inc., a commercial property management, leasing, and sales company based in Brevard County, Florida. In 2020, Tzadik Management, an industry-leading multi-family property management company based in Miami, Florida, acquired JM Real Estate, Inc.*

*McDonald, who launched JM Real Estate, Inc., with her husband Mike McDonald in 1997, focuses her attention on the brokerage, leasing and sales side of the business. She has worked in the commercial real estate industry for 33 years and is the only woman in Brevard County who holds both the CPM and CCIM designations.*

*Since JM's inception, the company has been involved in the acquisition and disposition of millions of square feet of commercial investment properties, primarily multi-tenant offices and retail. The company has also been involved in development projects, working with developers from the ground up in site selection, design, pre-leasing, and construction, to completion, full lease-up, and ultimately disposition spanning the full spectrum of commercial investment real estate.*

*In an effort to grow the company, become more streamlined, and stay competitive with today's technological advancements in commercial property management and brokerage activities, JM's principles joined with Tzadik Management when the company was acquired.*

**Thank you so much for doing this with us Jewel! Can you tell us the “backstory” about what brought you to the Real Estate industry?**

I started working in the real estate industry in 1987 when I took a temporary job in Orlando working for Equitable Life Insurance Company. I started as an assistant manager and really liked the industry. After I finished my bachelor's degree from Rollins College in Winter Park, FL, my husband and I moved to Brevard County, which is on the East Coast of Florida. I became the property manager of the Rialto Place Office Tower for several years. A couple that my husband and I were friends with started their own business and that's when my husband and I thought about starting our own company, as well. Then, JM Real Estate, Inc., was founded in 1997. We started with one contract, and after six months, we had about five, and our company blossomed from there.

**Can you share with our readers the most interesting or amusing story that occurred to you in your career so far? Can you share the lesson or take away you took out of that story?**

A lesson I learned was to never burn bridges. The industry is small. Recently, I met with an investor who I worked with previously. Also, always return phone calls and be professional.

**Are you working on any exciting new projects now? How do you think that will help people?**

JM Real Estate, Inc., is now managing Rialto Place Office Tower, which is

one of the nicest properties in Brevard County. My real estate career has come full circle, as I used to be property manager for Rialto Place Office Tower when I worked for another company in 1991. I am now the leasing agent for the property.

**What do you think makes your company stand out? Can you share a story?**

Our customer service, responsiveness and that we are always available.

**None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?**

Deborah Mickler. She took me under her wing and taught me everything she knew about the real estate industry. I have a deep gratitude for everything she has shared with me.

**Ok. Thank you for all that. Let's now jump to the main core of our interview. The Real Estate industry, like the Veterinarian, Nursing and Public Relations fields, is a women dominated industry. Yet despite this, less than 20 percent of senior positions in Real Estate companies are held by women. In your opinion or experience, what do you think is the cause of this imbalance?**

I think gender bias and stereotypes cause this imbalance. I have blonde hair, and while meeting with people over the years, I had to prove myself by showing that I'm an expert at what I do.

**What 3 things can be done by a) individuals b) companies and/or c) society to support greater gender balance going forward?**

1. Be an expert.
2. Know your business.
3. Study to hold titles/designations that give you an additional level of respect.

**In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges faced by women executives that aren't typically faced by their male counterparts?**

I don't see these challenges much anymore. Personally, I've never had a problem getting business due to the fact that I'm a woman.

**Can you share 3 things that most excite you about the Real Estate industry?**

I'm very grateful that my husband and I moved to Florida 30 years ago because real estate has been very good to us. Florida has a growing economy and is one of the leaders in growth. Even during the Great Recession in 2008, we did a lot of receivership and commercial sales. Our business was founded for property management and we were able to thrive during the hard times.

**Can you share 3 things that most concern you about the industry? If you had the ability to implement 3 ways to reform or improve the industry, what would you suggest?**

Everything is economy driven in real estate.

**What advice would you give to other leaders to help their team to thrive?**

Never be selfish and don't burn bridges. Also, focus on relationships because the real estate industry is very relationship oriented. Treat others with respect and encourage co-brokerage opportunities.

**Ok, here is the main question of our interview. You are a “Real Estate Insider”. If you had to advise someone about 5 non intuitive things one should know to succeed in the Real Estate industry, what would you say? Can you please give a story or an example for each?**

1. Be an expert at what you do and know your business.
2. Hold additional titles/designations to show your expertise.
3. Continue to build relationships. A lot of my relationships have mushroomed into other relationships and more business.
4. Return people's calls in a timely fashion.

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Thank you for your time, and your excellent insights!