

To The Core

All Andrew Karigan has ever known is hard work. As a young boy, it was delivering the local newspaper during the dead of winter in the suburbs of Minneapolis.

As a student, it was working and paying his own way through college and graduating at the top of his class at the University of California - Berkeley. In the process, he managed to study for a semester abroad at the Université de Nice in France.

As a real estate agent, it is offering "world-class" service for his clients, conducting creative open houses, and, of course, maintaining a tireless work ethic.

"My mother and also my grandparents from both sides came from Greece and had to start from scratch after World War II. As immigrants who spoke little English, they worked relentlessly for years and instilled that discipline on myself. They handed very little to me, but did encourage me to always make a go of it for what I



Andrew Karigan

Andrew Karigan of Karigan Residential Group provides prospective home buyers and sellers with “World-Class Representation” and a resume to back it up.

wanted in life," Karigan says. "That old-school way of thinking is something I've kept throughout my life."

Today, Karigan is an award-winning luxury home real estate specialist who primarily focuses on Newport Coast, Newport Beach, Corona del Mar, Laguna Beach, Shady Canyon, Turtle Ridge, and coastal south Orange County. In addition to having received his MBA in International Management from the prestigious Thunderbird School of Global Management and having attended international business schools — including the Oxford Centre for Management Studies in the UK and Management Centre Europe in Belgium — he also gained the ability to communicate in French, Spanish and Greek.

"I truly come from a global background in business and education," he says. "When you're dealing with higher-end properties, in particular, people want to work with someone they are confident in and can trust to be an excellent advisor. My experience and education help alleviate those concerns."

Prior to becoming a realtor, Karigan spent more than 20 years working in international sales in the electronics industry. He began to tip his toes in the real estate world during the early 2000's by starting to invest in properties himself. He eventually took on real estate as

a full-time career. He quickly went from selling multi-million dollar contracts of electronic components in Northern Europe to completing transactions of high-end homes along the coast in southern Orange County. His skills were recognized repeatedly over the course of his eight years at Prudential California Realty. Karigan later made the switch to the Beverly Hills-based high-end brokerage, Teles Properties, which was recently acquired by New York City-based Douglas Elliman Real Estate looking to expand its footprint into the California market. Douglas Elliman gained instant appeal to Karigan as this prestigious firm has a strategic global alliance with London-based Knight Frank Residential for business in the worldwide luxury markets spanning 60 countries and six continents. Karigan's international business and educational background were a perfect fit to the firm.

Early on in his real estate career, Karigan began to incorporate much of what he learned in electronics such as utilizing e-blasts to market himself along with his "For Sale" and "Just Sold" property listings. He also was among the first realtors to make use of property domain names as well as mobile apps to further expand his marketing reach. Today, prospective buyers can use his mobile real estate apps including "Newport Coast Guru" and "Andrew Karigan | Douglas Elliman Real Estate" to search for homes for sale, check open house

schedules, and review comparative property information.

The knowledge of three different languages has been a major asset. According to Karigan, many of his clients who come from overseas have fallen in love with the beauty of Orange County's coastal region. "Newport Coast has a very international audience. Many times, I can speak their language or, at a minimum, can state that I have been to their country," Karigan says. "People appreciate when someone takes a genuine interest in their culture, background or language. There is some familiarity from the get-go and these common denominators help to solidify the relationship quite quickly."

Another important aspect that Karigan says helps differentiate himself from others is his small, centralized team. It is not uncommon for real estate offices to operate in large groups, which in turn, can lead clients to being stuck with an inexperienced staff member. With Karigan's office, what you see is what you get.

"The expression I like to use is 'keep it core.' I am the core," Karigan says. "It's just me and my colleague, Barry Knickerbocker, who are the primary team members and work closely with each other and our trusted ancillary staff. When a client texts our team at 11 o'clock at night, it will be me or Barry that you get, not somebody else. We never disconnect and are always available to our clients when they need us. We truly work around the clock as needed."

A focal point for Karigan is his open house showcase, which he tries to hold at various listings at least once a week. It is here where the domino effect starts to unfold, and new opportunities and prospective clients emerge.

"I like being out there in front of the people as much as I can and open houses provide a major channel to do so," he says. "The face-to-face impressions made are like my own ad. I also have the opportunity of personally showcasing the properties that I am selling."

The positive impression he leaves behind with his clients has led to more referrals and, in one particular case, a string quartet performance.

Karigan worked with a client who was the lead violinist with the Pacific Symphony Orchestra. This particular client was so impressed by his service that he offered to Karigan to arrange a string quartet to perform at an open house or party as a gift.

"I took him up on his offer and ended up having this unbelievably beautiful concert in the courtyard of an estate property in Newport Coast that I had recently listed," Karigan says. "It was such a unique and stylish way to showcase this incredible home."

The concert even gained the attention of the *Orange County Register*, which included Karigan's extravagant open house in a piece called "Selling Outside the Box." He has since hired the string quartet to perform at other properties that he has listed. Karigan also used a strategic connection to have some of the homes he listed filmed and broadcast on Chinese television where they were featured on a popular real estate show.

Karigan has often found clever ways to transform an open house into an all-encompassing event. This knack was on full display with a multi-million dollar home in Newport Coast owned by a couple in Saudi Arabia. While they loved this particular home, the owners also owned multiple properties around the world and found that they rarely had time to make the lengthy trek out to California. Through their Boston-based attorney, they enlisted the assistance of Karigan to help them sell it.

"The Mediterranean-style home itself was beautiful with a large pool and ocean view but it was minimally furnished and had no art work on the walls," Karigan says. As usual, Karigan had an idea up his sleeve. To spruce up the vacant walls inside, he offered high-end photographer and artist Joey Skibel an opportunity to turn the home into an art gallery showcasing his work. Skibel loved the idea and the home was transformed. Karigan also teamed up with an investment advisor who was looking for a location to hold a networking event for her clients.

"I figured why not do it all at the same time?" Karigan says. "It ended up being a great opportunity for all parties involved, namely the sellers of the home. The home sold to Chinese cash buyers who were told about the home by someone who attended the event. A true success."

It's no surprise that Karigan, whose extensive client base includes key contacts in professional sports and the entertainment industry, is ranked in the Top 10 Real Estate Agents in the Western Region for Douglas Elliman Real Estate.

When it comes to buying a home, Karigan notes that prospective buyers do not like to be rushed or pushed into any one property too quickly. It is a concern that he is happy to alleviate each and every time.

"As an owner of several properties myself in the Newport Coast and Newport Beach area, I can speak firsthand about the nuances of different residential developments and the various types of homes on the market. I always tell people not to worry. I work at their pace," he says. "I am not somebody that pressures a person into buying the first property that he or she may like. I will always give my clients the most accurate and timely information so they, themselves, can make a truly informed decision about their investment." — **By Sean Stroh, California Business Journal**

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