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CORE Duo Singing Their Way to Success

At a past showing on East 83rd Street, Tom Postilio decided to go with his gut. The tour of the apartment was almost over and he felt the interested couple needed a final nudge. So Postilio stopped in his track and started singing Frank Sinatra's "All the Way" – the couple's wedding song.

What would be weird coming from any other broker worked for Postilio, who had spent years singing Sinatra on stage. "That sealed the deal," he said.

With college and graduate degrees in real estate mushrooming across the country, more and more people are entering the field as fully trained professionals. But Tom Postilio and his partner Mickey Conlon at CORE are living proof that an unconventional background can still be a big advantage.



Mickey Conlon



Tom Postilio

The two brokers have racked up more than \$1 billion in sales, working with clients such as Joan Collins or Michael Feinstein. Along the way, they also became stars of the reality TV show Selling New York. At least some of that success, Conlon and Postilio argue, is based on their background in the performing arts.

"What we do is pre-choreographed," said Mickey Conlon. "Real estate in New York is like show business. We have to create something that's exciting – we're always on stage." He would know. Before becoming a broker, Conlon spent years as a Broadway producer, winning multiple Tony Award nominations. Conlon's most recent production was the Broadway show "All About Me," starring Michael Feinstein.

Mickey Conlon added that his Broadway past has also helped him deal with the inevitable setbacks of an agent's work. "People in show business are used to rejection," he said.

Tom Postilio performed as a professional singer of the Great American Songbook, traveling all over the world, and had an 18-month run with the hit Off-Broadway musical “Our Sinatra”.

“The number-one rule in show business is know your audience,” said Postilio. He added that this rule has helped him with his work as a broker: “Whatever the situation is, we have to be able to intuit what a person’s personality is.”

Singing a Sinatra song at a showing may work well or be a complete disaster, depending on the client, he said. “That’s where other brokers go wrong. You can’t just do the same tour for everyone.”

Growing up on Long Island, Postilio never thought he would one day end up in real estate. Singing was his passion, and he didn’t hesitate when the Glenn Miller Orchestra offered him a job halfway through his studies at Suffolk Community College.

He toured around the world with the orchestra for about a dozen years, before his Off-Broadway stint with “Our Sinatra.” But, while he could fully support himself financially, he never reached the fame he had dreamed of.

“After 9/11, I was in a sort of introspective mood,” he recalled. At the suggestion of a friend, he switched into real estate, and was hired by Douglas Elliman’s Shaun Osher. Postilio calls his career switch part of “growing up”.

In 2005, he became a co-founder of CORE along with Osher.

Unlike Postilio, Mickey Conlon was no complete stranger to the real estate industry. The Long-Island native got his broker’s license as an 18-year-old and made money selling homes for a small boutique firm during breaks from his studies at Duke University. But he was more interested in musical theater.

“During one summer break I worked for the musical producer Cameron Mackintosh in London. That gave me a very warped view of what the business is like. I thought if you become a producer, you will be rich and successful,” he recalled.

After working as a producer for several years, he suddenly found himself unable to secure financing for his next play during the financial crisis of 2008.

“That was the time when conspicuous consumption was frowned upon, and I figured this would be around for a while. So I thought: What can I do?”

Conlon remembered his time as a broker, and began working for Brown Harris Stevens. At that time he was already dating Postilio, and the two would often pitch for the same clients. Joining forces seemed logical, and Postilio and Conlon became a team at CORE.

“A lot of our clients come through our show business connections,” said Postilio. “I do think that the TV show helps – people know us through it.” Selling New York, now in its fourth season, has not only won them clients, but also fans from around the world. They regularly get fan mail, and sometimes let fans from abroad visit their office.

During shooting, Conlon and Postilio have to set one or two days a week aside for the show. That still leaves them enough time for their day-to-day business.

Among their current listings are two townhouses with in-built recording studios. Michael Feinstein’s Townhouse on East 63rd Street is on the market for \$17.9 million, and Jazz legend David Sanborn’s townhouse on West 69th Street can be had for \$12 million.

The also represent East Harlem development One Museum Mile, which is currently 90 percent closed and under contract.

“I remember my first sale, which was for \$1.65 million,” said Postilio. “Back then it felt like the biggest number I had ever seen in my life. Now it seems small.”

Postilio and Conlon say the many new training and education opportunities for young real estate professionals are a good development that will improve the general image of brokers.

But they have no regrets over their unconventional background, crediting mentors like Shaun Osher for teaching them the tricks of the trade.

“We have a Masters in real estate,” said Conlon, “metaphorically speaking.”