

# A Network of Trusted Advisors

An Interview with Julie Faupel, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, REALM

**EDITORS' NOTE** Prior to the launch of REALM, Julie Faupel co-founded Jackson Hole Real Estate Associates which is a market leader and the 2011 and 2014 recipient of the coveted Christie's International Real Estate Global Affiliate of the Year award. Earlier, she had 12 years of management and consulting experience for luxury hotels and small businesses. Faupel has served on the Jackson Hole Community Foundation Board for the past eight years. She is the former Jackson Hole



Julie Faupel

Chamber of Commerce Board Chair, has served on the Christie's International Real Estate Global Advisory Board and is a member of the Young Presidents Organization, Global One Chapter. Faupel and her husband are avid supporters of entrepreneurship as trustees of the Silicon Couloir and independent investors in a number of start-up ventures. They are dedicated community contributors through numerous organizations including Co-Challengers of Old Bill's Fun Run, Rungius Members of the National Museum of Wildlife Art, and Sponsors for the Jackson Hole Center for the Arts.

**COMPANY BRIEF** REALM ([realm-global.com](http://realm-global.com)) is a patented proprietary platform designed to revolutionize luxury real estate by connecting real estate professionals and their discerning clientele to properties that fit their clients' interests and lifestyle, removing much of the guesswork to create a custom, bespoke experience. REALM membership is by invitation only and the services offered feature a proprietary technology platform that enriches client data and improves the overall real estate experience for agents and their clients. Using the platform's database, agents develop profiles for buyers, sellers, and properties. REALM then connects agents with other agents in REALM whose properties pair with the passions of their clients based on an extensive range of metrics. Brokers can use the information sourced by REALM to provide those clients with the highest levels of tailored, white-glove service. REALM fosters valuable relationships between real estate professionals and strengthens existing relationships between agents and their clients through collaborative, lifestyle-inspired experiences and the power of data.

**Will you discuss your vision for creating REALM and how the business has evolved?**

REALM was developed with the idea that real estate needed to change in response to the evolving dynamic of the luxury marketplace, the generational shift and outside influencers coming into the space as "disrupters." As the initial concept for REALM began incubating almost three years ago, there have been so many changes to the marketplace and the overall real estate industry, I don't think anyone

who was part of our initial brain trust of real estate brokerage owners and top producers could have ever predicted things would evolve as they have, especially in light of this year.

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The timing for REALM has never been more relevant than it has been in 2020. To adapt to the pandemic, we've evolved into a virtual community of elite real estate professionals. In a time when there has been so much uncertainty relating to health, safety, and social and political unrest, REALM has become a welcome place for idea sharing, brainstorming and support for our membership. As much as REALM is a technical tool that enables real estate professionals to do their jobs better, it's the network of trusted advisors and how REALM facilitates those interactions that really has become its value proposition. In a business as competitive as real estate,

I'm proud of the "soul" and camaraderie that exists among our members.

**How has REALM adapted the way it works to address the challenges brought on by the pandemic?**

When COVID hit, we were admittedly a little unnerved. The idea that, globally, every aspect of daily life would experience some level of disruption was certainly a reason for pause. However, as our team at REALM looked at the situation, we collectively decided that the best course of action was to lean-in and find new ways to adapt and ultimately thrive despite the adversity caused by the global pandemic. As a result, we developed programming that has become paramount to our overall REALM culture and how we conduct our business. With our membership just off the ground, in the second week of quarantine, we convened a "Community Forum" call and we had 150 top producing agents show up for the hour-long session. It was a soaring success. Since mid-March, we have had a weekly call with consistently great attendance. Over eight months, we've missed only one week due to a holiday. Now called Leading Minds, our weekly virtual meetings on Zoom are absolutely integral to the culture evolving within REALM.

Also, while REALM has always intended to be global, our international expansion plans were part of our model for 2021. However, with sellers and developers needing to showcase their properties to clients who could not necessarily travel, we began on-boarding international agents this year. To date, REALM is in ten countries and, based on demand, we'll continue with our accelerated expansion plans through 2021.

Finally, being a membership comprised of elite real estate professionals, we are hyper-focused on luxury. With the changing psychology of the luxury consumer, we've spent a lot of time discussing what the "new" definition of luxury is post-2020. The idea that we are moving into a "peace of mind" economy has been a focus of our conversations and marketing, inspiring some very non-traditional strategic partnerships. From new alliances with augmented reality vendors to wellness professionals and air purification resources, we are finding new ways to ensure that we deliver to our members the elite resources that will help them provide that kind of service to their sphere of influence.

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**REALM is innovation-driven. How critical is innovation for REALM’s business and where is innovation taking place within the organization?**

When you consider real estate, there has never been a time when where we live has shifted so dramatically than it did this year. “Home” became the source of education, commerce, recreation, communication and community overnight and, as a result, innovation is rampant within the real estate space. Whether it’s virtual meetings via Zoom or otherwise, the necessary bandwidth to homeschool children, the type of air filtration systems being used in multi-family spaces, or the ability to conduct commerce virtually through DocuSign and virtual notaries, innovation has become a way of life for everyone through the course of 2020.

Our REALM members are no exception and, as real estate professionals, they must remain at the forefront of innovation to accommodate the changing needs and dynamics of their clients. While REALM technology is helpful in understanding client preferences and elevating the service standards of the real estate professional, it’s imperative that the personal service they provide honors the necessary innovation seamlessly while still providing the industry foundation of human touch.

Our internal team at REALM is constantly innovating to meet the demands of our membership. Whether it’s the type of services that we build or the strategic partnerships we develop, REALM must deliver value in order to be relevant. One example is the amazing relationship that REALM has with Luxe Magazine and Sandow Media. Through our partnership, we have developed a video series that will air on DesignTV that encapsulates “The Great Lifestyle Migration.” This innovation is being sponsored by one of our members, Alan Canas, from the San Francisco Bay Area, and it’s sure to be the first of its kind to air. This is the type of thought leadership that we are proud to support and foster within REALM.

**REALM has invested heavily in technology. How critical is it to find a balance between the use of technology and the importance of the human touch?**

REALM truly lives at the intersection of technical innovation and humanity. Ever since the dawn of technology, there has been a fear that somehow computers, artificial intelligence and data will replace human relationships and interactions. In my opinion, real estate is so deeply

personal that no technology will ever replace the role that a trusted real estate advisor plays with their sphere of influence, their community or the families that they serve. One of the things that I have always loved about my career in real estate is that I am a part of something monumental for my clients. Whether it’s a first home, a vacation home, a trophy home or even an investment, real estate represents the culmination of something that is key in the lives of my clients; a wedding, a birth, a business event, a family retreat. The fact that I get to share in that excitement and rejoice in that piece of family history is so deeply personal. No computer can ever replicate that shared experience and the personalization that I am able to provide.

Through REALM, we deliver a more deeply personal experience using the data and the insights provided to us as trusted advisors. As we help our clients navigate new communities, new markets, trends and other real estate nuances, we can better cater to their individual preferences because we have the data provided by REALM. The art is finding the symbiosis when you have relationships that are enhanced by great technology, and that equilibrium is what our membership is all about.

**Will you provide an overview of REALM’s global network?**

We are currently about 300 members from 32 different brands in 27 states and 10 countries. We have about \$5 billion in listings represented in REALM and our membership represents in excess of \$250 billion in cumulative career sales. We can very proudly say that REALM is the most elite group of real estate professionals ever assembled. We have plans to grow further overseas in 2021 as well as to continue to expand our U.S. membership.

**REALM has assembled a group of founding partners with deep industry expertise and experience. How valuable has it been to assemble such a strong team of industry leaders to build the business?**

I count my blessings daily to be surrounded by the incredible support network and industry expertise that comprise the founding partners of REALM. They put their names and their “trustmark” behind REALM until it could stand on its own merit. That kind of incredible personal fortitude and generosity of spirit is part of the REALM ethos and it’s our mission to continue to honor that level of integrity and commitment as we continue to build this resource.

I look at the personal sacrifice and the risk that many of our constituents, founding partners and beyond, have taken in order to be a part of REALM and it’s humbling to think that so many believe so deeply in the success of this concept. I think that spirit of personal investment and sacrifice is part of what makes our team at REALM so amazing. We care so deeply about the members and their experience because we genuinely want to foster the success of these incredible professionals. That collaboration, work ethic and ethos combine to be the legacy that we are leaving as we continue to shape the future of REALM.

**What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in the real estate industry during this challenging and uncertain time?**

Young people should pursue what they love and take every experience as an opportunity to learn. A career isn’t defined by an industry, but more by how you approach it, and the journey that you take to get there can provide valuable insights leading to incredible innovation. Real estate is a fabulous career for me because it has fostered a lot of growth for me both personally and professionally. It allowed me to marry my love of hospitality and service with my entrepreneurial spirit. That said, it was the experience that I had working in luxury hotels and guest recognition software that helped me to craft what has ultimately become REALM.

Because of real estate, I have the luxury of working with some of the most interesting and diverse clients from unbelievable backgrounds. Through those interactions with clients and learning from their journeys in various industries, I have been able to identify new ways to innovate and to challenge the status quo in my own way. My career has been largely non-linear and I didn’t set out to chart a course in real estate. Instead, I’ve always gravitated towards doing what I love and feeling genuinely inspired by an incredible product or the people around me.

The biggest piece of career advice that I could offer anyone, especially in light of the disruption we are enduring currently, is that as you progress through life, in each bit of adversity you encounter there is tremendous opportunity for transformative growth and success. When it’s tough and you lean into those moments, there is genius in what will result. ●