

# The Mark Borst Letter

Special  
Volume

## How Did I Get Here

...my entrepreneurial journey

Today our Company consists of:

### **Real Estate Brokerage**

- 12 Brokers *and growing*

### **Property Management Division**

- about 25 doors *and growing*

### **Rehab Company**

– 2 house revitalized for new memories to be created *and growing*

### **Real Estate Investment strategies**

– Helping people monthly *and growing*

## And...How did i get here

My entrance into the Entrepreneurial world began in 1994 in the college town of Normal Illinois at the age of 21. It was my 4th year at Illinois State University and I started working at a small franchise restaurant delivery sandwiches for some beer money (the transition from apartment parties to the bar scene was an expensive one!). I knew a couple of the guys “managing” this place and thought I could make some easy money and not

have too many “RULES” to follow...Well I was right about one thing there were NO rules, it was anarchy, AND I COULD NOT STAND IT! I had been working there about a month and a customer asked me how I liked working there, and I told him “it was kind of a joke calling it work but I made some decent beer money as a driver” – woops it was the owner I had never meet him, as he was an absentee owner and lived 45 mins away.... He fired the GM on the spot! I guess my comment was the straw that broke him... So now my friends who were “student managers” were running the show, and they asked me to be the third manager and we could run it together. I AGREED. Long story turned short within 3 more months I was the GM and I had fired both of them, and another 3 months and I was opening a second location as an operational partner. By late 1998 we were preparing to open our 3rd location and I was now the Vice President of Operations and minority owner of all three locations. We opened soft for our third location with a grand opening scheduled about one month away. Out of



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the blue we were approached by a local restaurant family that wanted to buy my success. We settled on a sales price and an overlap time for me to teach the new owner the SYSTEMS, we had sold all three of our units BEFORE we even had the grand opening of store #3.

Our Success was Awesome, in about 4-4.5 years I had taken a struggling restaurant and turned it into 3 profitable ones while earning Franchisee of the year 2 years running (and Probably a 3rd if we would not have sold) as well as some other sales awards during that same two years. How could I top that success that I achieved at such a young age?

It was Early 2000 and I was itching to do something new. A friend of a friend had just opened a franchise restaurant that was on fire with sales but he needed more people to help manage it. The owner and I had a phone interview and got along great but I needed to "interview" with the GM. I did and I think he begrudgingly hired me as the kitchen manager but he knew why I was there and my capabilities. So I moved 150 miles away and only knew 2 people and a handful of their friends - little did i realize that this move would be a significant move my life. Within a couple months I saw a lot of problems in the restaurant had. First they had been open about nine months and NO-ONE ever had taken an inventory...Their revenue was so high and cash flow so good the (absentee) owners never felt it necessary or knew any better...That all changed, and I eventually took that store to the number 1 Sales store in the country, while holding the profit margins higher than the owners realized was possible.

Mid 2002, now married and a baby on the way, I was wooed away to a corporate restaurant looking to build multiple restaurants in the Chicagoland Area. As a soon to be father I figured that a "corporate" environment would be good for me, so I wouldn't be on the job for 60-70 hours per week. I was a part of a management team that opened about 14 stores in the Chicagoland area over an

18-month period. What was a hard adjustment and hard to comprehend was that someone 3 states away could know better than the team onsite...the "corporate" restaurant was not for me and my time quickly played out in the restaurant world.

I needed to "FIND" myself again mid 2004. By early 2005 Ended up in real estate, a long term interest but prosepcting was intimidating to me - at a restaurant it was easy get food in the mouths and they either loved it or hated it. I joined a local real estate office because I liked "their concept"...3 months in I went to my broker and told them that I had been studying the systems and I wanted to jump to the top and create something bigger than me...they promptly told me that I could not jump the line and I needed to do it they THEIR way. Well I'm not the knock on your door and cold call kind of guy...I tried their way for a while and it's not me! During this learning curve of Real Estate I also earned my Brokers license and took every educational opportunity given to me. I did OK in real estate 2005, 2006 - as I was a transplant to the area so I didn't know a lot of people. But 2007, I was onto something I had a few one off deals but i also was working with some bigger developers and investors and I was working on a monster of a deal .... THEN the economy took over, my monster deal fell apart on bureaucratic BS that caused me to lose a substantial amount of money in an instant and money down the line! poof, gone...and now some of my other one off deals started falling apart as FINANCING tightened in a heartbeat...

In the 2008 "recession" I found myself having to pay CC bills with CC's just to try to keep my (our) head above water

...But following to this unfortunate turn of events I started a new company in the Property Preservation Industry, I kept my Real Estate License but had to feed my family. So by August of 2008 I was trashing out houses, cutting lawns, winterizing and changing locks...all self-taught. Before the end of 2008 I had 4 employees and was the #1 contractor in Lake County for the company I was working with. All this while

still continuing to sell Real Estate.

While the Real Estate Industry as a whole was falling apart as people were losing their homes and the people that could afford to buy homes could not due to tightening financial regulations, I decided what better time than now to open a Real Estate office. So December of 2009 I opened an office, and by January of 2010 I had 3-4 agents I was holding licenses for. The Draw? I feel that it was because the agents that knew me knew I was not the typical Agent/Broker, I have always done things a little different...but I was also an inexpensive alternative, no monthly fees, low split...basically somewhere to hang your license if you wanted to do deals or just ride out the madness of the economy...and my expertise to help negotiate and help agents problem solve. I offered them a place they can operate their own business in Real Estate.

By 2011, my Preservation company was starting to take off, I received a large contract needing representatives in 4 states. Almost overnight I had a fully functional office over about 12 employees that was working double duty operating as my Preservation and Real Estate office. The Preservation industry was unregulated and worked very well on the capitalist mindset...until unscrupulous companies were taking advantage of other smaller companies and in the end government regulated companies....2013 starts the regulatory meltdown of the industry, seeing this I started taking some steps to exit the industry. First Quarter of 2015 I successfully started a property management division offering a full menu of services to both landlords and tenants. We also started a rehab company that buys/fixes/sells homes. And a Real Estate Investment Strategies to help people buy or sell homes that are distressed directly to buyers, and help people increase their ROI with real estate.

July 2015, The Preservation company came to a screeching halt when we were given a 3rd price decrease of the year, i pushed back to my "partner" company, they ended my contract...Hurt the cash flow, but helped my blood pressure...My team went from about 20 employees and 30 sub-contractors to

2 employees in an instant!

Is there a theme here? Perseverance to do the right thing. Have there been mistakes made along the way, of course that is how we learn, but throughout all the years I have held one common belief that to be honest with yourself and others and good things will happen to all involved.

Have I been successful in life up to now at 42 years young?

When I first got into real estate I was told how success was viewed, I was told that it has to look like "THIS" to be considered successful... Why did "this" success in real estate look so different than 10 years of success I had in the restaurant world?

Well I'm glad I fought thru the years and here I am 11 years into what I consider a successful real estate career.

So how did I come to begin with this part of my journey... in late 2015 I met a guy named Ryan Fletcher. Ryan's approach to real estate is very similar to the way I have always done it, he just helped me articulate it. Ryan, and a couple dozen other likeminded people, and I have a documented a proven strategy to sell real estate and we put in book form. You can get your FREE copy at [www.OurFreeBook4Charity.com](http://www.OurFreeBook4Charity.com)

Thanks for reading my story and I look forward to continuing to share my journey with you and I hope you share yours back with me over the next months/years to come

-Mark



The misfits I mastermind with!

**IT'S NOT ABOUT  
BEING THE BEST**

**IT'S ABOUT  
BEING BETTER  
THAN YOU WERE  
YESTERDAY**

### The Power of The Media (Story)

Trump has catapulted to the top of the GOP ticket for Presidential nomination.

The reason...

He controls the media. Love him or Hate him. He doesn't really care. What he cares about is that he is controlling the media. Think this isn't all planned out? You are wrong. While these candidates are spending tens of millions of dollars on negative "ads" Trump controls "The Narrative, The Story". See, he doesn't have to pay for the ads. He controls the message on the actual shows. He gets the prime airtime for free while others have to pay for 30 second snippets.

That is the power of the media. Trump says something. The media reacts. The talking heads

are all talking Trump. His name is everywhere. It has taken him from a joke that everyone thought stood ZERO, ZERO chance to the Presidential nomination.

And thus, this brings me to the Power of The Media.

If you have a message and can get the message to the public you can gain momentum. Be it a small business owner trying to get your business or an Entrepreneur trying to Brand themselves.

That is why I'm starting the Lake Central Plus Advice Givers Podcast...



**COMING SOON!** We will be helping local businesses get their story out!! We will be interviewing Northwest Indiana Business Owners, Entrepreneurs, and Thought-Leaders To Bring Northwest Indiana Residents The Best Advice From our Community's Brightest Minds. If you would like to get your story out, visit [www.LakeCentralPlusBooking.com](http://www.LakeCentralPlusBooking.com)

*May I take you on a bit of journey? ...*

## **Four Stories To Higher Profit – from your home sale and, anything else you sell in life.**



There is a website on the Internet that I believe is the best website in the world. Would you like to know which it is? I'll reveal that website in a moment but first have, let me share with you several stories that recently impacted me. The first comes from a book, written by Carmine Gallo.

"Meet Aimee Mullins, she has 12 pairs of legs. Like most people she was born with two, but unlike most people Mullins had to have both legs amputated below the knee due to a medical condition. Mullins has lived with no lower legs since her first birthday.

Mullins grew up in a middle class family in the middle-class town of Allentown, Pennsylvania, yet her achievements are far from ordinary. Mullins doctors suggested that an early amputation would give her the best chance to have a reasonable amount of mobility. As a child Mullins had no input into that decision, but as she grew up she refused to see herself as or to accept the label most people gave her—"disabled." Instead, she decided that prosthetic limbs would give her superpowers that others could only dream of.

Mullins redefines what it means to be disabled. As she told comedian and talk show host Stephen Colbert, many actresses have more prosthetic material in their breasts than she does in her whole body, "and we don't call half of Hollywood disabled."

Mullins tapped her superpower—her prosthetic limbs—to run track for an NCAA Division One program at Georgetown University. She broke three world records in track and field at the 1996 Paralympics, became a fashion model and an actress, and landed a spot on People magazine's annual list of the 50 Most Beautiful people.

When Mullins told her story to the world, "The opportunity of Adversity," just as I have told you her story here, it was quickly viewed nearly 1.5 million times.

Let me tell you another story. This is story that I both witnessed and read about. In his book, Gallo puts introduced me to Cameron Russell.

In a presentation, Russell tells the audience, "Looks aren't everything." Cliché? Yes, if it had been delivered by anyone else. Russell, however, is a successful fashion model. Within thirty seconds of taking the stage Russell changed her outfit. She covered her revealing, tight-fitting black dress with a wraparound skirt, replaced her eight-inch heels with plain shoes, and pulled a turtleneck sweater over her head.

"So why did I do that?" She asked the audience. "Image is powerful, but also image is superficial. I just totally transformed what you thought of me in six seconds."

When Russell told her story, the full version, not just the intro has I have shared with you here, it was quickly viewed more than 6.5 million times.

Let me tell you another story. This one about Magic Johnson but more specifically, his business partner, Ken Lombard. Ken and Magic were scheduled to meet with Peter

Gruber who, at the time, was the CEO of Sony pictures. Upon meeting Gruber in his office, the first thing Lombard said was, “Close your eyes. We’re going to tell you a story about a foreign country.” Gruber thought it a little “unorthodox,” but he shut his eyes and went along with it. Lombard continued, “This is a land with a strong customer base, great location, and qualified investors. You know how to build theaters in Europe, Asia, and South America. You know how to invest in foreign countries that have different languages, different cultures, different problems. What you do, Peter, is you find a partner in the country who speaks the language, knows the culture, and handles the local problems. Right?” Gruber nodded in agreement as his eyes remained shut. “Well, what if I told you a promised land exists that already speaks English, craves movies, has plenty of available real estate, and no competition? ... This promised land is about six miles from here.”

Lombard and Johnson were pitching Gruber on building movie theaters in underserved urban communities, but knew Gruber wouldn’t be interested if he knew from the start that this was their idea.

Lombard knew, first, he’d have to create a desire for Gruber to own such a location. For this, he needed to tell the above story. He’d need to take Gruber on a journey, so he could see, and imagine, before he judged and ruled out.

Through the power of storytelling, Lombard and Johnson cast themselves as the heroes of the narrative who would help Gruber navigate the waters to reach the promised land. It worked! In the first four weeks of opening, the first Magic Johnson Theater was one of the top five highest-grossing theaters in the Sony chain.

Now, before I wrap this up and reveal to you what I believe is the world’s greatest website, let me tell you one last story.

Meet Rob Walker and Joshua Glenn. They founded the site SignificantObjects.com, a website dedicated to the power of story. Significant Objects was a social and anthropological experience devised by Rob and Glenn. The two researchers started with a hypothesis: a writer can invent a story about an object, investing in the object with subjective significance that would raise its objective value. In other words, they could buy crap, tell a compelling story about that crap, and because of the romanticism of the story, create a desire for the object to sell it for far more than they purchased it for. They curated objects from thrift stores and garage sales. The objects would cost no more than a buck or two. The second phase of the experiment saw a writer create a short, fictional story about the object. In the third step, the object was auctioned off on eBay.

The researchers purchased \$128.74 worth of objects. The thrift-store “junk” sold for a total of \$3,612.51. The men had discovered that a powerful story had raised the average products’ prices by 2,700 percent. For example, a fake banana cost 25 cents and sold on eBay for \$76 after the story was added. An old motel key cost \$2 and sold for \$45.01, after a story was told about the object to make it “significant”—hence the name of the site, Significant Objects.

Through the experiment the researchers concluded, “Stories are such a powerful driver of emotional value that their effect on any given object’s subjective value can actually be measured objectively. Or simply put, “When someone likes a story about an object—or your home, if its on the market and you’re selling it—that emotional connection is expressed by

the buyer in his willingness to pay a higher sales price. This of course, earns the seller of the object a greater profit for what object whatever that object is being sold.

“So why tell you these stories?” Because each one of these stories reveals a secret that we use when working with real estate clients to realize higher bottom-line profits. If you want to turn adversity into opportunity, for example, you craft a story. Every home has its flaws; there is no perfect home. But through the power of story, as Aimee Mullins demonstrated, how those flaws are seen and viewed to the outside world can be changed. The thesaurus definition for the word disabled is: broken-down, confined, decrepit, handicapped, helpless, hurt, incapable, laid-up, lame, maimed, out-of-action, paralyzed, powerless, weakened, worn-out, wounded, wrecked. But as Aimee Mullins exemplifies, even with no lower legs, none of these “definitions” are true. She believes her prosthetic limbs are her superpowers and give her options. Longer prosthetic to make her taller for balls and black tie events, spring-loaded prosthetic legs for running at incredible speeds, shorter prosthetic for every day... she has options we do not. And while I can't ever imagine wanting to trade my lower legs for no lower legs, through the power of hearing Aimee's story, I wouldn't now fear it. With every adversity there is opportunity. The Power of Story helps real estate clients to see that same truth, when looking at or selling a “flawed” home. We can turn it into a positive...

If you want transform the look of your home, as Cameron Russell revealed, image is only surface deep. In the same way Russell completely transformed her image within 30 seconds of taking the stage, we, through a process called “Scientific staging”, can transform the image of a clients' home. In her full presentation Russell talks about, in preparation for a photo shoot,

of having a team of hair and make-up stylists, photographers, fashion coordinators, people to help her pose, etc., all working to tell a story through her newly created image. And, in real estate maximum profit works in exactly the same manner. Through the creation of a new imagine, we're able to tell a home's story. And, from Rob and Joshua's research at Significant Objects, on the power of story, we know this is a path to higher profit.

The reality is, we all love stories.

They have the power to entertain us, suck us into a message, and help us envision the impossible, even change our minds about deeply held beliefs—as Lombard proved to Gruber about building theaters in urban areas. This is why I spend so much time on TED.com, listening to and studying stories. Sure, I enjoy them, but also, for my clients, my job is to tell them effectively. Their profit, and the speed of their home sale, depends on it.

If you love great stories and stories that really make you think, I believe the site TED.com is the best website in the world. If you search Mullins and Russell, you will find their full presentations along with others.

I guess my point is—never forget—the story you tell about your home, in more ways than you can imagine, has impact on your bottom-line profit. So don't shortcut this step and be certain that no agent you may hire to help you, shortcut this step either.

