

ATLANTA'S LEADING SOURCE FOR WEALTH-BUILDING

Atlanta **TRIBUNE** THE MAGAZINE

www.atlantatribune.com

Atlanta's **Top Sellers**

Change the Real Estate Game

Risky Business:
How to Avoid
Entrepreneurial
Scams

Understanding
Your Mortgage
Mentality

Jobseekers: Check Our Corporate Want Ads

May 15–June 15, 2009 \$3.95



Ennis Antoine, Tonya Williams and Jason Edwards

27 | **Un-Mortgaging the American Dream**

By Kamille D. Whittaker

It's time to re-think home ownership.

37 | **Scammed**

By Regan Toomer

There's nothing better than a weak economy for scammers.

43 | **The Perfect Trim**

By Jacqueline J. Holness

Trimmed in size, companies are on to the business of regrouping.

51 | **They Are Hiring!**

By Janelle A. Williams

In need of a job?
These employers are looking for you.



Designed to Excel

True real estate heads know that Home and Garden Television's shrewd programming offerings have become — bar none — the go-to resource for all things realty. So when Tonya Williams was selected out of a multitude of realtors to headline HGTV's popular "Designed to Sell" Atlanta Edition as the show's real estate expert, the defining moment was, as she aptly puts it "when opportunity and preparedness intersected."

Not unlike many realtors that converged on Atlanta's ripe residential real estate market circa 2000, Williams, a Southern California transplant, started from scratch — no clients, no referrals. How she went from that to being ranked as the #1 RE/MAX sales agent in Buckhead is a lesson in strategic positioning and fine-tuned discernment.

"I became a licensed realtor in 2000 and basically played 'Atlanta taxi cab' for a while. I was new to Real Estate, so I did not know how to qualify and distinguish serious buyers from the people-who-love-to-look-at-houses-but-never-intend-to-buy-one." The beginner's blues were short lived. After carving out a niche with moving high-end luxury abodes, within six months she closed on her first deals; and six years later she became the #74 RE/MAX Sales Agent nationwide and the #5 RE/MAX Sales Agent in Georgia.

Today, she heads Williams Realty & Consulting, and when she isn't tactfully recommending changes as the real estate expert on HGTV, Williams is busy consulting and staging homes which she says goes hand in hand with her expert role on the airwaves. "We just wrapped filming for HGTV's 'Designed to Sell' and 'Bang for Your Buck,' and then I also got tapped to be the real estate and design expert for Turner Broadcast System's 'Movie and a Makeover,' sponsored by PineSol and *Essence Magazine*. So, I get to wear my real estate hat and apply my staging and décor expertise."

Her ancillary endeavors insulate her from the palpable trepidation of the residential real estate markets. "There's a pervasive fear, but it's a relevant fear because there are two things that are happening: People are in fear of losing their jobs and they don't want to commit to increased financial exposure. Second, for the people who are able to buy, there is so much inventory, so people are taking longer to bite. In a good market, people are competing and you may see a house one day and if you don't make an offer, it's gone the next. But with the amount of inventory, people are much more pensive."

Her advice: If you're itching to sell — sit, wait and use any extra capital to spruce up your digs.

"This is a great time for people who are not able to sell to invest in their home and do the improvements and upgrades that will make it more valuable when it is that time to sell. You may *want* to sell but you don't *need* to sell. So, in this saturated market, just ride it out and enjoy your space." **AT**

— KDW

