



COLDWELL BANKER  
ISLAND AFFILIATES

# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

We are thrilled to share our CBIA Agent Newsletter with you! This newsletter is more than just a communication channel; it's a platform to share insights into the latest market trends, industry updates, and opportunities for professional development through featured training sessions, exciting challenges, and invaluable tips to elevate your real estate game.

We want this newsletter to be a valuable resource, so don't hesitate to share your thoughts, suggestions, and success stories. Your feedback will shape future editions and make this newsletter a reflection of our vibrant CBIA community.

## GROW YOUR BUSINESS

### Staying Safe in Real Estate

We are one of the only industries where we run out to meet strangers in random places without having any systems in place. Sixty thousand agents were victims of crime in 2024, according to a National Association of REALTORS(R) survey, and 27% do not have any safety protocols in place.

Real estate is risky—we sit at open houses alone, show vacant properties, and work in unfamiliar areas at odd hours. We need to be publicly visible and show we are successful, yet we never think that anyone would harm us. Both men and women experience moments where they feel unsafe.

#### How to Protect Yourself

##### Meet new clients in public.

Pick a public place you frequently visit to meet your new customer. Most people whose intent is harm don't want to meet you in a public place and be seen.

##### Don't rely on a weapon you're not trained to use.

There is a misnomer that carrying a weapon will save you - unless you are proficient with it, it can be just as bad as not having anything at all.

##### Take a safety or self-defense class.

Confidence comes from training. When your body knows what to do, fear doesn't take over.

##### Stay aware of your surroundings.

Be aware of your environment and where opportunities might exist for someone who might wish to harm you.

##### Partner up when possible.

It's always best to be in pairs—particularly at open houses.

##### Trust your instincts.

What does your instinct feel like? Nagging feeling, anxiety, gut feeling, doubt, hesitation, suspicion. More often than not, that feeling is correct.

##### Take two seconds.

When you arrive at your destination, look around to see if anything is off.

##### Park strategically.

Know your ingress and egress of a house. Park on the street where you can easily get in a car and drive off, as opposed to pulling into a driveway.

##### Follow the OODA Loop.

Observe. Orient. Decide. Act. Mentally walk through what you'd do in a risky scenario so you can respond faster if needed. Having a plan is your strongest defense.

##### Watch for red flags.

If the person is more interested in asking questions about you versus the property, stay alert. That's often a warning sign.

##### Escape the situation.

Don't announce your intention or that you are uncomfortable. Just move.

##### Use your tech tools.

Your smartphone has GPS trackers for you to share your location. It may also have safety apps.

##### Keep your car key in your pocket.

Your key fob may have a panic button. Press it and say you think someone is breaking into your car - it gives you a reason to get outside.

**Remember, there is no amount of money to replace your life. Like mom always told you, it's better to be safe than sorry.**

**Carla Rayman Kidd** - [carla@cbislands.com](mailto:carla@cbislands.com)

## WELCOME NEW AGENTS

#### St Croix

Dorian Foster - [Dorian@ColdwellBankerVI.com](mailto:Dorian@ColdwellBankerVI.com)

#### St Thomas

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Shay-Lin Smith - [shaylin@coldwellbankervi.com](mailto:shaylin@coldwellbankervi.com)

#### Bermuda

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### Lighting, Layout & Lifestyle: The 3 L's of Great Real Estate Photos

For many agents across our islands, professional photographers aren't always an option. Between travel distances, scheduling, and high costs, many are left holding our phones and hoping for the best.

But here's the good news — with a bit of planning and a good eye, you *can* take listing photos that look like they came straight out of a luxury magazine.

Let's simplify the process with what I call “**The 3 L's**” — *Lighting, Layout, and Lifestyle*.

This simple formula will help you create photos that attract more buyers, drive engagement online, and tell the story of your listing beautifully.

#### 1. Lighting – Let Nature Do the Work

Natural light is your best friend. Open every curtain, door, and window so the sunshine can spill in.

Avoid using overhead fluorescent or yellow-tinted lights; they create color imbalance and shadows that distract the eye.

##### Pro Tip:

Shoot during the “*golden hours*” — early morning or late afternoon — when the light is soft and warm. If you're shooting interiors, position yourself so that the light falls *into* the room rather than directly into your lens.

Bonus tip for our island agents: the ocean's reflective light can brighten your photos even indoors, so angle your shots to capture that natural shimmer whenever possible.

#### 2. Layout – Frame the Flow

Before you take a single photo, walk through the space. Notice how a buyer would move through it. That's your visual path.

Declutter countertops, hide cables, remove personal items, and straighten pillows. Less is more.

**Think like a buyer:** show how one space connects to another. Stand in the corners to capture depth and flow. Keep your phone level (turn on the grid lines in your settings) so your walls stay straight and your images look balanced.

And remember — you're not documenting rooms, you're showcasing *space*. Frame your shots to invite the viewer in.

#### 3. Lifestyle – Capture the Island Dream

This is where your creativity shines. Don't just photograph rooms — capture the *feeling* of living there.

Add small touches that tell a story:

- A tray with a tropical drink on the patio.
- A linen throw on a hammock.
- A plant swaying by an open window.
- A coffee mug with an ocean view.

These subtle details create an emotional connection — and emotion sells. Buyers fall in love with a *vision* of life on the islands, not just a property.

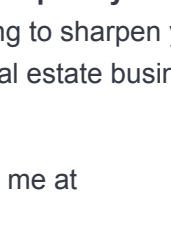
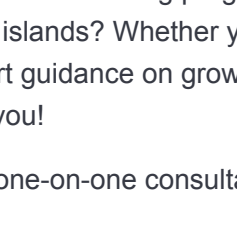
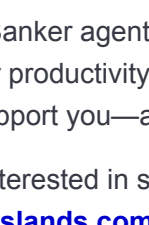
#### Final Thought

Every time you photograph a listing, remember the 3 L's: **Lighting, Layout, and Lifestyle**.

Master these three, and your photos will not only attract more buyers — they'll make people *feel* something.

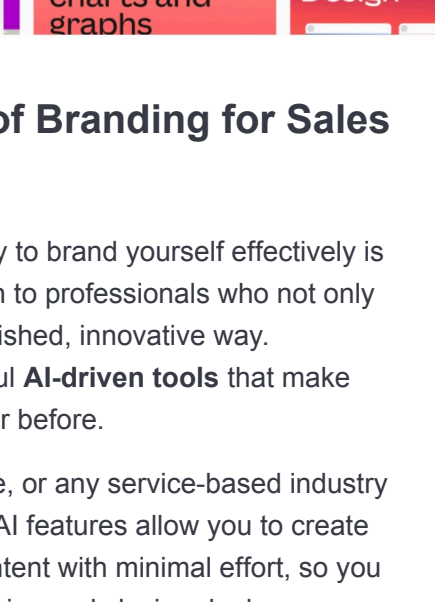
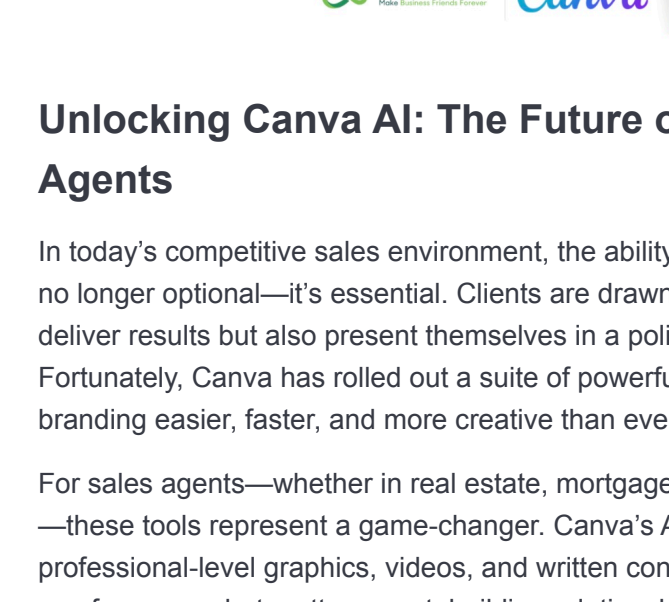
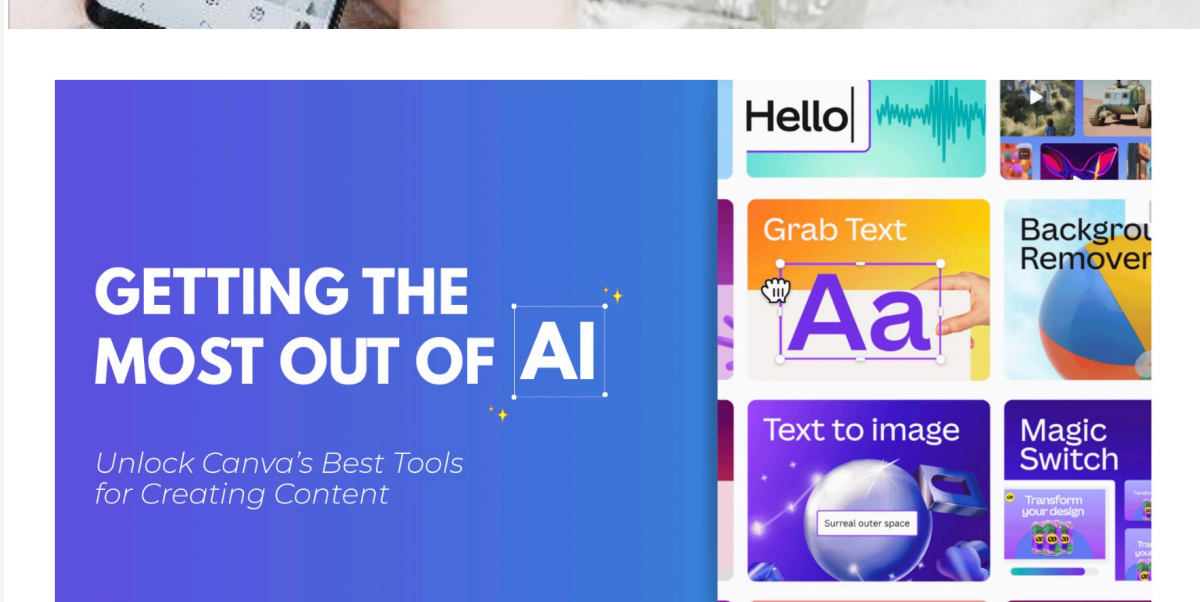
Because buyers don't just buy homes — **they buy the feeling. Capture that feeling.**

**Kelly Eckersen** - [kelly@cbislands.com](mailto:kelly@cbislands.com)



Did you know that all of our training and coaching programs are **completely free** for Coldwell Banker agents across our islands? Whether you're looking to sharpen your skills, boost your productivity, or get expert guidance on growing your real estate business, we're here to support you—at no cost to you!

If you're interested in scheduling a one-on-one consultation, email me at [kelly@cbislands.com](mailto:kelly@cbislands.com)



### Unlocking Canva AI: The Future of Branding for Sales Agents

In today's competitive sales environment, the ability to brand yourself effectively is no longer optional—it's essential. Clients are drawn to professionals who not only deliver results but also present themselves in a polished, innovative way. Fortunately, Canva has rolled out a suite of powerful **AI-driven tools** that make branding easier, faster, and more creative than ever before.

For sales agents—whether in real estate, mortgage, or any service-based industry—these tools represent a game-changer. Canva's AI features allow you to create professional-level graphics, videos, and written content with minimal effort, so you can focus on what matters most: building relationships and closing deals.

#### Read More:

**Unlocking Canva AI — The Future of Branding for Sales Agents**

**Continue Reading** → <https://mybffsocial.com/unlocking-canva-ai-the-future-of-branding-for-sales-agents/>

**Matt Gentile, CEO - MyBFF Social**

### Do you have any ideas on something you would like to share in our newsletter?

A success story? An innovative new marketing program? A remarkable new listing or sale? Please let us know.

#### CBIA Island News Facebook page

Did you know we have a Facebook page that shares information on the islands? This information is for you to put in your newsletters or use on your social media. To join this private Facebook page just for CBIA, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1132501950801034>

Please email Carla at [Carla@cbislands.com](mailto:Carla@cbislands.com) to let her know your office so that she can approve you as part of the group!



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