



Chris Austin

Building Success
by Building People

BY JOSEPH COTTLER
PHOTOS BY DAMIAN GONZALEZ

IN THE MID-2000S, Chris Austin was on the road with a band, just after graduating with a psychology degree. He thought he might continue on to grad school to pursue a career in marriage and family counseling, but he was unsure. “The music thing really just took off for us and became something that was feasible for us to do for a living,” Chris says. “So, we hit the road and started doing it.”

Any musician will tell you that “making it” is hard, especially when you want to start a family. He transitioned into real estate, almost by surprise after a part-time start. “Real estate pulled me out of the music industry because it started doing so well that it didn’t make sense for me not to do it,” Chris explains.

After joining a successful real estate team, Chris’s career jumped off the blocks and sprinted directly into the Great Recession, but the group thrived despite the market crash, and he stayed with that team for nearly a decade. The team grew into one of the Top 10 in Kansas City, but the personal cost became too high. “I remember the day my wife came in crying because she felt like a single parent,” Chris recalls. “I was selling 80 to 90 homes a year, but I was gone all the time. Something had to change.” That moment—and encouragement from mentors—pushed Chris to start his own team. His wife even left her own career to join him. “She said, ‘If you do this,

I’ll leave the field I got my master’s in and I’ll come work with you.’ That really gave me the courage to start what is now the Austin Home Team.”

10 years later, the team numbers a dozen agents and employees and continues to grow, built around a core principle: success flows from investing in people. That applies to clients and colleagues alike. “Nobody brings in more business to our company than our agents and staff,” Chris says. “So, we started treating our team like A+ clients,” which means Chris is passionate about his team members achieving their professional and life goals. “We want not only their one-year goals but their five-year goals and beyond. What does life look like for them if we’re sitting on a porch together five years from now, talking about how amazing the last five years have been?”

One of his proudest moments came when a longtime agent achieved exactly what he had envisioned: his wife left her job, his kids had opportunities in school, and one even earned admission to Stanford. “There were tears everywhere when we pulled out that five-year sheet and realized he had achieved all of those goals,” Chris remembers. “As they grow, we grow just by default.”

Faith is central to his approach. Chris admits he wrestled with whether material success fit with his calling, but over time,



he came to see real estate as a vehicle for ministry. “We serve our people in a way that we feel showcases our faith and showcases the gospel,” he says. “We get to be on the call list when someone’s had a baby, or a divorce, or a death in the family. We’ve gotten to pray with clients and share the hope that’s within us. That’s the real gift of this business.”

Does he ever slow down? Yes. Their family hits the road five or six times a year, whether it’s Hawaii, San Diego, or even a mission trip to Kenya. And he still finds time to dust off his bass guitar a few times a year, filling in for friends on tour if they swing through the metro, and playing music at church.

For Chris, real estate has never just been about sales volume. It’s about reshaping lives, starting with his own family’s trajectory. Raised by a single mother in Kansas City, he was one of very few in his family to graduate from college. “Once I heard that I had the ability to change the entire trajectory of my family tree, that lit a fire underneath me,” Chris says. “So many people have invested in me and brought me to this place of success. I don’t want to end this thing and look back and say, ‘I had a ton of success.’ I want to look back and say that I helped create success in a lot of people.”

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