

Real estate a very viable option for women making post-pandemic career changes for more flexibility

 By [Yael Geffen](#)

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Although the overall long-term economic impact of Covid-19 has yet to be fully realised, growing evidence suggests that women have been impacted particularly hard. Not only have their child- and home-care duties increased exponentially, they are also more likely than men to have permanently lost their jobs due to the pandemic.



Yael Geffen, CEO of Lew Geffen Sotheby's International Realty

However, women have also shown phenomenal resilience during the past 18 months which was clearly evidenced by a new survey from the professional women's network AllBright, which revealed that not only are they resilient, they are also proactive, innovative and entrepreneurial.

According to the report, many women are now looking to make major career changes, with as many as one in four of the respondents planning to start their own businesses going forward and around 60% considering completely new directions with an eye to jobs and sectors that are more flexible and accommodating.

In this regard, there are few better options than real estate. Not only is it a viable alternative for women impacted by pandemic job losses, it's one of the best careers for women with families who dream of having it all.

Real estate offers flexibility

While many jobs force women to choose between career advancement and their families, real estate offers the flexibility that few other professions offer while at the same time providing for their financial future. The sector is also broad enough that you can find your niche that suits your unique skill set.

Best of all, even though real estate is a demanding career, you have the option to set your own hours because, ultimately, you are your own boss - even if you work for a large, established agency. This means that you can set and meet your own targets, you can work as much as you want – mostly from home – and most of the time it's easy to factor in your other priorities and obligations.

To this end, the advancement of technology has undoubtedly helped as it allows us to communicate digitally with clients about most aspects - which means that you can phone clients, email documents or even prepare contracts from anywhere – even whilst sitting in the bleachers whilst your child plays soccer.

Constant learning

And the sky really is the limit because real estate's fluidity allows you to respond to what you're passionate about right now whilst allowing for personal growth and as you set yourself targets, you expand your potential. And, because real estate has learning built into the career, it's also one that affords women the opportunity to constantly learn new skills and advance their knowledge base.

In fact, you're required to constantly be educating yourself as it's a very dynamic industry with many factors that are prone change, which means that each year you get the chance to learn about a different aspect of the business and continue to

hone your skills.



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Becoming an investor

Another significant benefit is that it's a job that also makes it much easier to become an investor because agents gain a thorough knowledge of the market and are also first to know about investment-worthy properties that may not have yet hit the market, allowing them the opportunity to move first.

Starting and developing a property portfolio is a very smart move as it's a massive revenue opportunity, both in the short term through rental income and in the long term through return on investment.

When I was recently on Margaret Hirsch's show, she said she began her property portfolio with just one small flat and now she has a portfolio worth over a billion rand.

I understand only too well from personal experience that forging a new career can be both daunting and challenging but those who commit with passion and give it their all can soon make their way up the real estate corporate ladder if they take heed of the following:

- Do your research and select a top brand with which to align your own personal brand;
- Choose a company that supports women;
- Be authentic and don't be afraid to stand out;
- Pay attention to details from the get-go as it's especially important for women to develop a thorough knowledge of their field and the expertise that makes them stand out as invaluable to an organisation. It is also the best way to command respect;
- Don't underestimate the importance of being your own advocate and don't be afraid to put yourself forward to ensure your colleagues and superiors know who you are and what you are capable of;
- Embrace technology;
- Look for continual learning opportunities;
- Continually expand your network and develop contacts who will champion for you in your industry.



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At the end of the day, real estate is one of those careers where you get out of it what you put in and women with a strong work ethic will quickly benefit from this aspect.

Over the years, women have made tremendous progress in the sector, where their numbers as agents, brokers and even franchise owners have steadily grown.

Although it has taken longer than it should, women in the industry are finally beginning to attract the attention they deserve, with the first female cast members of shows like Million Dollar Listing (Kirsten Jordan) and Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles (Tracy Tutor) paving the way.

Regardless of whether they have management aspirations or not, real estate is still one of the best industries for women

who want to create their own destinies. It's one of those careers where you can be your own boss, set your own hours and reap the rewards of all your hard work.

ABOUT Yael GEFFEN

Yael Geffen is the CEO of Sotheby's International Realty South Africa and a member of the board. Geffen has a BA in Communications and Economics and a Master's Degree in Integrated Marketing and Communications Strategy.

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