

IREM® From the Front Lines Podcast

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Bonus Episode 5.2

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A presidential chat between 2024 IREM President Libby Ekre, CPM®, and Immediate Past President Renee Savage, CPM®, CCIM

Welcome to a special episode of From the Front Lines, where we bring you an insightful conversation between Libby Ekre, CPM®, 2024 IREM President, and Renee Savage, CPM®, CCIM, IREM's Immediate Past President. Join us as Renee interviews Libby, who shares her experiences, insights, and visions for the future. Tune in and discover the dynamic exchange between two leaders shaping the past, present, and future of our organization.

Hi, everyone. I'm Renee Savage, IREM® Immediate Past President, and I'm here today with Libby Ekre, our IREM 2024 President. We so look forward to your leadership, Libby. And I know that our members and the industry would like to know a little bit about you and what you've got planned for this year. So is it okay if I asked you a couple of questions?

Libby: Absolutely.

Renee: Wonderful. So I heard your theme is power of purpose, can you tell me a little bit about how you found your purpose?

Libby: If only I really had a purpose when I started in this industry, which I probably am like everyone else. But it was in college that took a little break, couldn't figure out what I was going to do. And at the end of the day, ended up looking for a position as a receptionist. Ended up, it wasn't a receptionist job, it actually was a leasing consultant job, and it quickly grew, I was a manager at 21, and then a property supervisor at 25. And after all of that, we decided really to start a business. I was 34. And that is how it started. I haven't looked back.

Renee: That is super impressive. So how did you get involved with IREM? And then also, how did you stay engaged this long?

Libby: Well, interestingly enough, we had to have a competitive edge, being a brand new company, trying to figure out how to be competitive in the market. And at the end of the day, we knew we had to have our CPM® to do that. So we joined the local chapter. And what a great group of people in Phoenix! They were mentors to me, and you probably had plenty of mentors as well. And at the end of the day, we were looking for that place that could give us the knowledge, the networking opportunities, and everything a growing company needs, plus a network of new business.

Renee: Wow. So you mentioned the CPM and how you got that early in your career. And I imagine that made you much more confident having that designation, and it clearly sounded like it helped your business. What do you think the CPM represents in the industry?

Libby: Well, for me, it was that confidence that mattered. So when looking at others that have it as well - I think you probably feel the same way - you see the dedication to the profession, you see the

knowledge those CPMs have, and you see what they have when it comes to the highest level of ethical standards out there.

Renee: We talked a little bit about how it helped your company and the value to the industry. So how else did IREM help you in your career?

Libby: Well, I don't think we could have been as competitive if we didn't have our CPMs. The fact is, people look to us to be the experts in the industry. And when you're a brand-new business, what do you have other than a few people and a fax machine (back then)? We saw we had to grow. And IREM helped us to do that. And we were able to have the network we needed. I mean, that's the truth.

Renee: Totally.

Libby: Absolutely.

Renee: So last year was IREM's 90th anniversary. And it was the first time we had an all-female leadership team, which is actually continuing through this year with a new group for the leadership team. What would you say to women starting in the field of property management?

Libby: Well, my goodness, it was really hard when we were starting our business. And IREM gave us confidence with the CPM. But I have to say, being in leadership, and a all-women leadership team, and the second year in a row, think about this: The opportunities are just endless for women in this industry. Look what we've done. And I wouldn't have believed it either. But here we are. This is pretty exciting! And I think we have great opportunities for other people: Getting the education that you need gives you the confidence that you can have do it too. IREM's a place to do that.

Renee: I totally agree. So I know your main focus as President, I mean, it usually is helping to continue the strategic plan. But is there anything else that you want to focus on this year?

Libby: Yes. Along with all of the strategic plan that we have in place already and we look at regularly, we definitely want to focus in on growing our membership, expanding those resources that we have to offer other members that create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued, and a part of something meaningful. The power of purpose, everyone matters at IREM. We need to open the doors so that everybody can discover their unique purpose here. And this industry you ... they will find the support and the guidance and a sense of belonging. I believe that. I know you do too. It's our shared purpose: To uplift each other, enhance professional capabilities, and make a positive impact in this real estate management field.

Renee: Well, Libby, what a great direction you want to go, and your idea of power of purpose is incredible. And I'm really looking forward to the impact. And so good talking to you, and I wish you the best for your year as president

Libby: And I'm going to need you around so don't go anywhere.

Libby: I promise. I'll be there for you.

Renee: You got it. Thank you.

Libby: Thanks.

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