

TAMPA BAY

REAL PRODUCERS[®]

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MEET

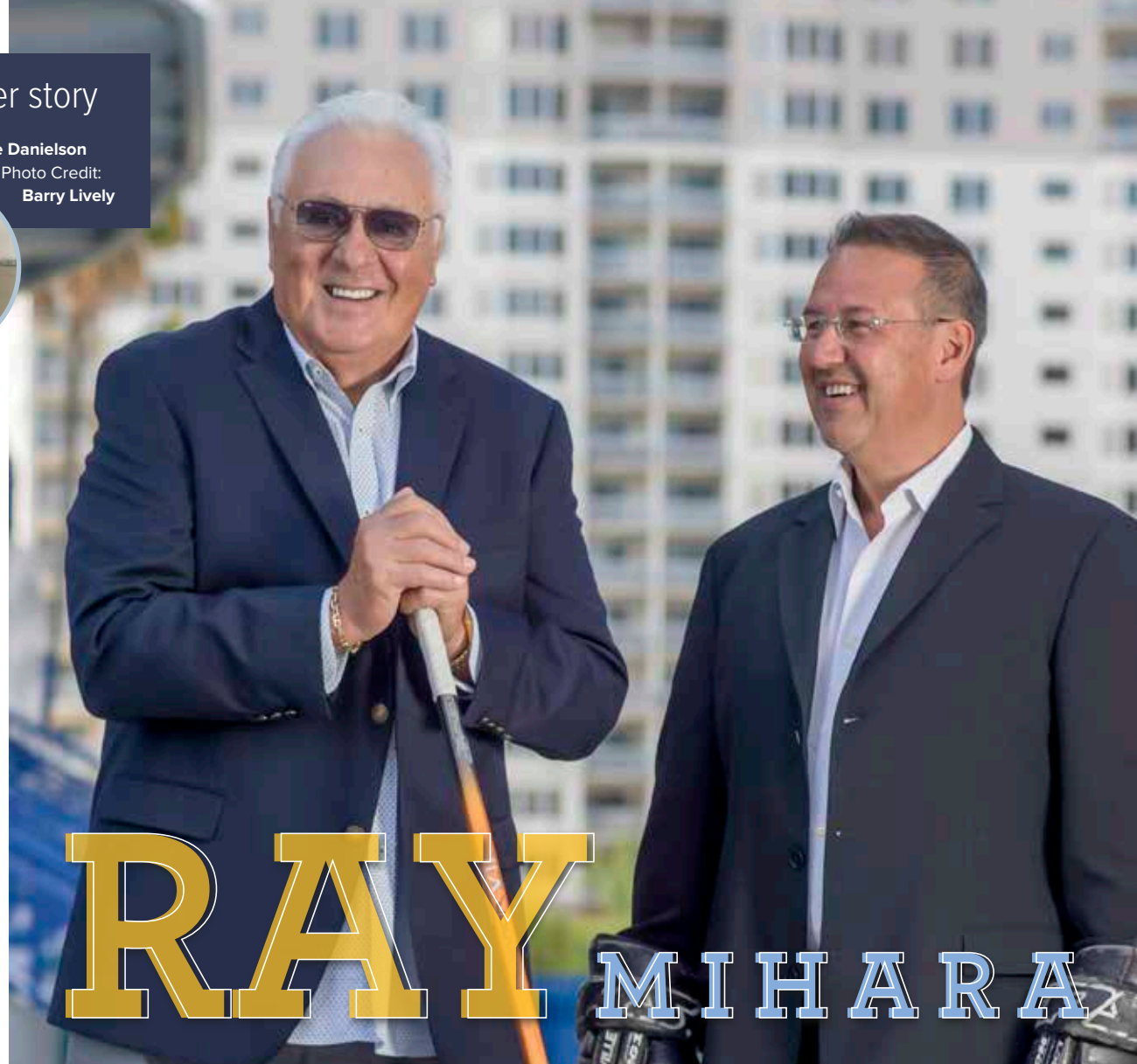
RAY

MIHARA

Photo Credit: Barry Lively

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Photo Credit:
Barry Lively



RAY MIHARA

Building Teams. Leading with Impact.

Think back to your favorite leaders in life.

Chances are they shared a few key attributes — recognizing potential, building on strengths and motivating others.

Chances are they look a lot like Ray Mihara.

Ray is Broker and President of Mihara

& Associates. But no title captures every quality that positively impacts others.

Competitive Fire on the Ice

Growing up, you'd find Ray mixing it up on the ice and pushing the puck toward the hockey goal.

Like a lot of hard-nosed competitors, Ray's passion for the sport

extended to college. But he didn't leave it there.

"I wanted to be a professional hockey player," he recalls. "Well, very few make it in the big leagues. So, I did what I considered to be second best ... handling marketing for a professional hockey team."

Ray hit the ice with the Buffalo Sabres. He had



an instinct for the marketing game. He saw the opportunities and knew how to capitalize on them. After a year with the Sabres, he stood out.

"My boss, Steve Donner, called me and said, 'I have an opportunity. How would you like to work with Phil Esposito? The Tampa Bay Lightning were just awarded an NHL franchise,'" Ray smiles. "It took all of about three seconds for me to say, 'When do we leave?'"

Ray made the move and started building from the ground up.

"It's challenging to start an NHL hockey team. People in Florida didn't know what a Zamboni was, what a blue line was, or anything about the sport," Ray remembers. "So we were educating and selling Tampa Bay Lightning at the same time."

With Ray's work, the rough patches of ice were overcome, and the Lightning launched successfully.

A New Game

After two and a half years, Ray pursued another passion — real estate. In 1997, he joined ERA.

Ray's instincts from hockey translated well.

As he says, "I think that's why Mr. Esposito gave me the chance to be involved with his team, because he felt I was aggressive, and I understood the sport. I was able to take that and move into the real estate world, and the marketing programs I put in play helped get the phone ringing right away."

By studying local industry leaders, and using printed marketing materials, the phones definitely rang. By his second year, he was one of the top three agents. By his third year, he finished at number one.

Player/Coach

While he was making goals for his clients and himself, soon he was mentoring others — like a player/coach.

As he says, "It was a good feeling, because I was making money, and I was also helping others succeed."

For 10 seasons, Ray wore the ERA colors. Seven of those years, he was the top agent. In the process, through teamwork and leadership, Ray had created a smaller group of individuals there.

About that same time, Ray felt it was time to move to a smaller organization. In the process, the economic downturn hit.

It wasn't easy, but Ray stayed on his feet and adapted to the new rules.

"During the crash, we had to understand the changes — things like short sales and foreclosures and all of that.



It became our new world,” Ray points out. “And we had to understand how to best help clients through a very difficult three years. Going through that time really helped me understand that this business is a lot more about people than it is about homes. Having a chance to meet with families and see what they’re going through, it was clear to me that our business is 80 percent about people and 20 percent about homes.”

A new opportunity emerged. As the economy rebounded, Ray’s team encouraged him to start a brokerage.

“I had no interest in being a broker, because I enjoyed being in the trenches,” he smiles.

With persistence from Ray’s team, Mihara & Associates was born in 2012. He had a specific vision for the new group.

“The game plan was very different from traditional companies. With most brokers and companies, the agents go out, they make the sales and brokers get a percentage, and the company survives,” Ray says. “Mine was different. I felt my expertise was on the marketing side. So I did the marketing, and they did most of the selling.”

Over time, the team has grown. What started as seven agents has grown to a roster of 65. And in the mix of it all is Ray.

“I’ve never given up selling,” he says. “Because I love being in the trenches. But the thing that excites me the most is seeing my agents do well. I love hearing their stories and their success. I also al-



ways want to be there. If there’s a troubled deal, my being in the trenches and understanding what they’re going through allows me to help.”

Winning Each Moment

Winning isn’t easy, but Ray helps new agents see the path.

“When you get into this business, it requires a huge sacrifice. And the first one to three years, you have to almost give up control of your life, and become completely dedicated to your beginning,” Ray emphasizes. “But if you do it, and do it up front, after three years, you’ll regain control. And the balance will come back.”

With that balance, Ray and his team give back to multiple causes, including the American Cancer Society, Children’s Home, Pediatric Cancer Foundation and Humane Society of Tampa Bay.

Ray also cherishes time with his wife, Annette, and his 8-year-old daughter, Brooke.

“Brooke is very young, but as I look to the future, my dream would be for her to someday take over the business. While you don’t want to force kids into a career, maybe a nudge here or there wouldn’t be so bad,” he smiles.

Whether they’re exercising, enjoying Lightning season tickets or playing golf or camping, Ray, Annette and Brooke take time to enjoy the moment.

“Our world revolves around speed. But it’s good to slow down and enjoy the moment. Because the moment will come and go,” Ray recommends. “If you do fewer things every day, every week, every month and every year, and you actually enjoy the things you do, and you know what? You enjoy life.”

It’s about making an impact.

“Each night, I go to bed wanting to know people are better because of something I did or said — that I’ve been a good husband, a good parent, and that I’ve made a difference with my clients and my team. My success is knowing I had a positive impact on them.”

Some lead during games. Others like Ray Mihara live it.