ELLIE JOHNSON

'Because nice does matter'

巴菲特旗下地產公司紐約總裁專訪

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A powerhouse in New York's real estate industry, a woman renowned for both her business acumen and her charm, is building the New York real estate arm of one of the world's most influential companies.

Ellie Johnson is a name familiar to anyone involved in Manhattan's luxury real estate industry. For almost 11 years she ran a prestigious real estate office on the Upper East Side in Manhattan. During her tenure, she grew the office's successful sales team from 70 to 140 agents. Known for its abundance of highly polished women and men, her office ranked first in sales revenue for the company year after year.

She has now been entrusted with building a full-service real estate firm on behalf of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, a company owned by business magnate Warren Buffett, the second-wealthiest individual in the United States.

ELLIE'S JOURNEY EAST

Ellie's childhood was in El Salvador, and her teen years and young adult years were spent in the United States on the West Coast. Her real estate career started in the San Francisco Bay Area, where she sold 14 homes in her first year. "I attribute the success to the manner in which I treated my clients; they always came first, the commissions followed," she says, smiling warmly.

In 2000, family brought her to New York from the West Coast. Although she found the Manhattan real estate landscape very different, feeling it lacked standards for service and transparency to the consumer, she remembers going home and telling her husband, "You can fund me so I can start my own company, or I can become ladies who lunch." He replied quickly, "Where do I sign?" Ellie recalls, laughing.



在曼哈頓紐約高端地產界，埃莉·強生（Ellie Johnson）是一個響亮的名字。埃莉曾創立並成功經營自己的地產公司，後被蘇富比國際地產公司重聘主管曼哈頓上東區銷售辦公室。在其任職的十一年間，埃莉帶領上東區辦公室，建立起了強大的社區網絡，並成長爲區域地產銷售的領頭羊。

2017 年，她受波克夏·海瑟威地產公司（Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices）邀請，擔任其紐約分部總裁，成爲紐約地產界關注的焦點。

Ellie Johnson, president of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New York Properties.

The company she established in 2002 was Executive Brokers.

Ellie feels extremely blessed and fortunate that her experiences over the past 17 years in Manhattan's competitive real estate industry have enabled her to achieve great success in her career.

Her transition to Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices is another milestone on her résumé. She attributes this to the high standards she sets for herself, her employees, and her sales executives.

"The stars were aligned; it was a mutual meeting," Ellie says of her new role. "I guess I have to say that I was at the right place at the right time, with the right people. And it was one of those things where I still pinch myself, and think 'how did this happen?'"

She says Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices is allowing her to build their company and their business in New York the same way that she built up her company. "That was very appealing to me," she says. "They are very trusting of my judgment and decision-making, guided by my CEO, Candace Adams."

MANHATTAN LUXURY REAL ESTATE

Ellie has aligned Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New York Properties to serve and provide services to all of her clients, be it at the highest end of the luxury market, or for someone buying their first home or a commercial property. It is also important to her that Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices' clients get an immediate response and experience the highest level of service—the same level of service that allowed her to sell 14 homes at the beginning of her career. "This feeling can only be accomplished by ensuring that the client's needs are the agent's most important asset," Ellie says.

A Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New York Properties partnership with the Doyle auction house puts her office on an exclusive pedestal with other players in New York's luxury market.

Ellie says that when you are working in certain levels of the real estate industry, especially in the luxury markets, it's synonymous to have the auction and art world components to the business. "And it's reciprocal; by working together we can provide 'white-glove' services to our clients, from a home's contents to the sale of their home."

對的時間和對的人

「一切就是那麼自然發生了。」埃莉說,「我沒有追求什麼,大概是在對的時間地點,遇到了對的人。直到現在,我也還會擰自己一下——受到巴菲特旗下地產公司的邀請,成爲其紐約分部總裁,這些究竟是怎麼發生的?」

一直以來,埃莉熱愛著地產行業。入行第一年,埃莉就售出了 14 棟住宅。「太好了,我可以做這行」,她當時想。後來,埃莉主管蘇富比地產公司的紐約上東區分部。她在任期間,該辦公室的業績不斷增長,經紀人從 70 名增加到 140 名,業績長期占據公司營收第一的位置,成爲旗艦。 2017 年,股神沃倫·巴菲特名下的波克夏·海瑟威地產公司找到埃莉,她成爲了這座商業巨頭進軍紐約地產的第一任總裁。

在寸土寸金、競爭激烈的紐約地產市場,從來沒有僥倖的成功,即使聲名赫赫,也難以輕易討好。來自倫敦的福克斯頓、百年老牌科威地產相繼在紐約市場受挫。人們對盛名之下的波克夏·海瑟威地產,自然畫著一個問號——紐約這座「大蘋果」,會不會給埃莉分一杯羹?

「不同的地產公司有不同的特點,我們會帶來不一樣的東西。」埃莉說。這並非一場爭奪戰,每個人都在爲他人服務。所謂知己知彼,埃莉也從未懷疑過自己的能力。

當年,從西海岸初到紐約的第一天,埃莉告訴先生,「你可以資助我開一間公司,因爲我知道怎樣給客戶提供更好、更高標準的服務。」毫無半分猶豫,她的先生爽快地說「我應該在哪簽字?」。實際上,埃莉一直都是一個可以給投資人信心,讓客人安心的地產專業人士。

舒心的安全感

埃莉知道,一個好的地產經紀,能夠在價值之上建立信任。波克夏·海瑟威,這個名字本身便帶給人經濟上的安全感,這正是其獨特之處。人們相信波克夏·海瑟威地產在投資領域的表現,而地產領域爲什麼不呢?

所以,埃莉並不急於向市場推銷他們的獨家代理房產和金牌經紀人,她想建立的,是那種當顧客想到波克夏·海瑟威地產,便能同時感受到舒心和信任。

「比如說,有些特別的房子需要一年或兩年才能售出,在這期間客戶對你的服務會有所期待,你要有能力來支撐銷售運營的整個過程——而不是在一系列新品發布、煙火晚會的高調宣傳之後,資源耗盡,客戶不得不失望而歸。」

埃莉創造了一個完整多元的團隊,不同專業、文化或經濟背景的顧客都能找到適合自己的選擇。無論是尋求精品套房,或是挑選千萬豪宅,亦或出售古典名居,在波克夏·海瑟威,任何一個顧客都會感受到全心的服務。

WORK–LIFE BALANCE

Ellie compares the lifestyle of a broker with that of the gazelle that gets up every morning and starts running and doesn't stop until the sun goes down. "We're dealing with the global market, where different time zones have created a 24/7 environment, similar to the hotel industry. For example, a client looking online at a potential investment, personal residence, or a studio apartment for his or her outbound college student is going to hit Send at four in the morning (ET) and expect an immediate response."

Understanding the pressures agents face, Ellie is a big believer in mindfulness in the workplace. She allows her agents to take time off when they need it, and she makes an appointment with herself every day to maintain her work–life balance. For Ellie, spending time with her family and maintaining mindfulness are always the top priorities.

Dressed immaculately in an azure blue dress, Ellie is a picture of warmth and surprisingly down-to-earth.

"I have had incredible mentors along the way—people who were so willing to share their knowledge and skills—and I carry that through my career. I try to extend that to my employees and my sales team members. They say that if you plant seeds you get flowers, and I try to weed my garden every day so that the weeds won't grow," she says, laughing.

Her office is home to a few special keepsakes given to her by some of her sales executives throughout her career, including an interesting sign that reads "Because Nice Matters." It was originally given to her by one of her agents for her beach house. The sign had such an incredible impact that she has kept it in her office ever since.

"Because nice does matter. As the saying goes, say what you mean but don't say it meanly, right?" she says, laughing.

Ellie believes that having the right people is incredibly important, and Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices' executive team follows the same philosophy. Ellie was drawn to the fact that all the executives in the company's residential arena started out in sales, allowing them to understand how the agents feel on the other side of the desk and to empathize with the pressures that agents face.

「在銷售的一定階段，特別是在精品消費領域，拍賣、藝術和住宅幾乎是彼此的代名詞。」埃莉說。波克夏·海瑟威地產與 Doyle 拍賣行的合作，使得它一開始便與地產老牌蘇富比和布朗哈里斯史蒂文斯平起平坐，成爲紐約高端地產市場的三劍客之一。

一切正如沃倫巴菲特旗下公司所信奉的那樣：當信任將正確的人聯繫在一起，收益便會自然而來。

母親的力量

與其說熱愛銷售，不如說埃莉愛的是人。「我喜歡每當埃莉決定說不的時候，她總是耐心地告訴我們爲什麼——這不是所有人都能做到的。」市場部主管凱瑟琳說，「大概因爲她既是母親又是祖母，埃莉也成了我們的老師。」

埃莉的執行團隊，都曾做過銷售員，「我們有過同樣難忘的經歷：一秒前還站在世界之巔，一通電話，就被打入萬丈深淵。」埃莉眞誠地理解一個地產經紀一天的情緒漲落，當辦公室門被推開的剎那，她就會從他們的肢體語言中看到包裹的重重心事。

團隊成員被現實拉扯的心，總能在埃莉這裡獲得平靜。也許，這就是母親的力量，

「波克夏·海瑟威地產建立在謙遜之上。」在這裡，人們不是孤軍奮戰，而是彼此支持。

作爲新英格蘭和威斯特徹斯特市場的一部分，埃莉收到的支持也不僅來自曼哈頓。在康州，有一個 65 人的團隊提供她互聯網、法律、市場和人力等資源的支援。總是會有人說：埃莉，我眞爲你高興，我能幫助你什麼？

「我們的主席羅恩·皮耶爾，每次看到他，都會想給他一個大大的熊抱。」埃莉笑道，「他們是非常成功，非常有能力的人，但又是那麼親和，非常願意分享他們的技能、知識和資源，你會想和他們一直交談下去。」

每天早晨當埃莉睜開雙眼，她都會想，「我今天做的足夠好嗎？還有什麼可以幫助實現公司的目標，實現自己的目標？」

當聽到經紀人告訴她：「埃莉，我要休假四天去南卡和我的好兄弟打高爾夫」，埃莉也會爲他高興，因爲埃莉知道，她的經紀人妥善安排著自己的家庭生活。她有理由相信，面對工作的時候，她的夥伴們都將付出百分之百的努力。

就像此時，埃莉已經約好了當天兩點的身體訓練課，這是她每天必不可少的日程安排。當她出現在今晚的活動時，人們又將會看到敏銳而智慧，擁有溫暖笑容的埃莉·強生，這位在紐約曼哈頓地產界的領軍英才。



Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New York Properties on Madison Avenue and 57th Street.

"Our chairman of the board for HomeServices of America, Ron Peltier—every time you walk out of a room where he's present, you just want to hug him like a teddy bear," she says. "These are very powerful, successful people, and yet they're so approachable and willing to share their skills, their knowledge, their resources in a way that you just want to do more."

Ellie has specifically chosen staff members who have "that integrity and that moral compass that aligns them to really respond to your needs."

Since the soft launch of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New York Properties in January, Ellie's office has received a great response from the brokerage community, the general public, and the financial world. She attributes the success of this launch to Katharine Riggle, marketing director for New York Properties.

"There's such an incredible passion for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices that people want it to succeed; there's that energy that is underneath. It's like a current underneath all of it," Ellie says.

In the financial world, Berkshire Hathaway is known for its core principles of integrity and responsibility, and for its adherence to value investing. The company also provides shareholders with lucrative returns on investment.

"I believe that the core values and foundation in which Warren Buffett created his companies, and his dedication and genuine interest in people and in humanity as a whole, transfers through everything that is touched by that brand," Ellie says.

Though Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices of America is a relative newcomer to the United States real estate industry (HomeServices of America was founded in 1998), it is the second-largest real estate company in the nation, with 42,000 agents across the country.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New York Properties is part of a global expansion effort that will see the company establish a presence in many markets in coming years.

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New York Properties is located in the heart of Manhattan on Madison Avenue and 57th Street.