



Sandestin Real Estate

Rebrands as The Agency Northwest Florida Beaches

story by **LAURIE EINSTEIN KOSZUTA**

“Luxury in real estate isn’t necessarily defined by price point,” says Sara Becnel, president of Sandestin

Investments and managing partner of The Agency Northwest Florida Beaches. “It’s about ensuring that anyone who entrusts us with their real estate needs feels truly cared for and catered to.”

This client-first philosophy motivated Becnel to rebrand Sandestin Real Estate as The Agency Northwest Florida Beaches in January, aligning the company with a globally recognized real estate firm known for its white-glove service and innovative marketing resources.

“For over a year, I’d been exploring ways to broaden our reach and visibility,” explains Becnel. Determined to find the right fit, she began focusing on franchise models, looking for a brand

whose philosophy, values, and approach resonated with her vision. One name, The Agency, stood out from the rest.

With its global presence of over 130 offices in 12 countries, Becnel feels The Agency is small enough to maintain its boutique feel and collaborative culture while facilitating networking across its many locations.

“I wasn’t interested in joining a massive legacy real estate brand,” Becnel emphasizes. “I wanted to preserve our small, service-driven culture while giving agents and clients access to broader markets and powerful resources.”

For Becnel, the timing of her search was ideal as The Agency was actively seeking a partner along Florida’s Emerald Coast. The new partnership secured exclusive territory stretching from Perdido Key to Inlet Beach, offering sellers greater exposure and helping

buyers discover properties they might otherwise have missed. Listings now reach high-demand domestic and international feeder markets.

This connection has already delivered results. One early success was receiving a \$22 million referral for a Seagrove property from a connection with The Agency’s Aspen office.

The momentum didn’t stop there. Shortly after the Northwest Florida launch, The Agency approached Becnel about expanding into Madrid. The company had been seeking a partner to help launch the location, and with Becnel’s leadership and business skills, they felt she was the ideal choice. After conducting her due diligence, including market research and financial projections, and meeting with the local team, Becnel decided to commit to the new office.

According to Becnel, Spain's real estate market is booming, with Madrid being a key European market. The Agency already operates in Mallorca, Málaga, and Barcelona. "Expanding to Madrid made sense," she says. "We are committed to opening in Madrid on June 3, 2025."

Today, the team operates out of the Sandestin Welcome Center in Miramar Beach, with plans for a new satellite location on Highway 30A. Becnel recently appointed Glen Stegemann as broker and executive director to oversee operations in Northwest Florida, Madrid, and future markets.

"He's like a real estate encyclopedia," she laughs. "He brings energy, fresh ideas, and great support to our existing team."

At its core, Becnel emphasizes that the company remains family-owned and values-driven, powered by the same trusted team that people know and love, but with a new name and a wider reach. This high-touch approach extends beyond sales to rental support. While The Agency does not directly handle short-term rentals, it recommends Sandestin Rental Management for vacation rentals within the resort and beyond.

According to Becnel, another distinction is that The Agency Northwest Florida Beaches offers employee and 1099 agent models, which attract top-tier talent and offer agents flexibility and a personalized structure that works best for them.

Looking beyond the merger and Madrid, The Agency plans to actively explore other markets, both regionally and internationally.

"This isn't just about growth for growth's sake," Becnel emphasizes. "It is about thoughtful expansion." ■



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—SARA BECNEL, PRESIDENT OF SANDESTIN INVESTMENTS AND MANAGING PARTNER OF THE AGENCY NORTHWEST FLORIDA BEACHES

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