

Wichita Chamber Business Accelerator

Episode 123

Cindy Carnahan

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Don Sherman: [00:00:00] Welcome to another exciting edition of the WCBA Powered, of course by Evergy. First, thank you for listening. Don't forget to like us. Love us share us.

We truly appreciate you checking us [00:01:00] out in the house, my friend. Let's get it straight from the get go. Okay. My friend, the Carnahan Group.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That's what's up.

I think that she would agree that she's my friend as well.



Well, I'll let you have this one, Don. I'll let you have one. One. Welcome.

Don Sherman: Fighting over. Fighting over Cindy.

Cindy Carnahan: I'm glad to be here, even though Don's here.

Oh, wow.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: See, I told you she was my friend

Don Sherman: apparently, so I got it wrong again.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Well, if you would please tell our listeners who you are and what you do.

Cindy Carnahan: My name is Cindy Carnahan and I am a real estate broker with Reece Nichols south Central Kansas. I'm also with the Carnahan Group, and I have lived in Wichita all my life. I never left home.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Oh wow. That's

Don Sherman: what high school?

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Wonderful story.

Cindy Carnahan: East High.

Don Sherman: East High. That's okay.

Cindy Carnahan: Would you like to hear the alma mater

or,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: No, not today, Not today.

Don Sherman: Can you can sing right?

Cindy Carnahan: I can.

Don Sherman: Let her sing alma mater

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: not gonna sing

Cindy Carnahan: Oh,

Don Sherman: what's the point? [00:02:00] We can read it. I thought you was gonna sing it. I'm sorry. Go ahead. See we go back.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I see.

Cindy Carnahan: a long,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: okay, I'm gonna leave that one alone, but, so tell us, Cindy. Okay, so you have, you've been in real estate your entire career.

Cindy Carnahan: This is my 48th year.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Oh, wow.

Congratulations.

Thank

Whoa. So So what made you get into this business?

Cindy Carnahan: Well, I got a degree in elementary education. I found out it was a calling and I had not been called. I decided,

Okay. Look, I said I loved the children. I really couldn't stand their parents. Yeah, it was a really, it, I cared so much about the children and I'm so empathetic that I wasn't good at it.

Just that simple. I was not good at it, so I went to my dad. It sounded like this, daddy, I can't [00:03:00] do this. He said, well, you can get a real estate license and I'll hire you, but I won't support you. So I had a summer that I was gonna be paid as a teacher, and I decided, I'll go get a real estate license and I'll see if I can do this.

And so the first year I made \$9,000. That would've

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: The entire year?

Cindy Carnahan: The entire year. That would've been what I would've made if I had been teaching that year. So,

I, it took about eight years, and of course I was young. I was 22 years old. So it was tough. But Daddy kept throwing me up in the air and finally I flew.

And so I worked for him for 13 years and then he decided to retire at 72. And I decided, well, I'll go work for my largest competitor. And see how that goes. And then I was given an opportunity, [00:04:00] ReeceNichols came calling and said, would you consider putting in a company owned store.

And I said no three times. I said, no, I'm in a company owned store. Why would I change? That doesn't make any sense. Especially at the age I was when they asked. And so, they came back and said, what if we give you a franchise for all of South Central Kansas? And I said, I'm your girl.

I'd be happy to do that. And it became really exciting to think about creating something brand new.

Creating something from the ground up, developing a culture that was different somehow. The real estate business, of course, being in it for 48 years I've seen a lot of change. Yeah. But it's not all been good change.

Like any industry. We started out learning how to be in relationships. And then we started [00:05:00] to let technology take over that piece of our job and it doesn't work in the real estate business. So I was able to get together with some like-minded people who wanted to create something that was col collaborative.

Not competitive. The real estate industry is very siloed. There's the Carnahan group. There's individual agents. They go into their offices and they shut their door. there's not that much collaboration and there needs to be a lot more in order to really effectively represent buyers and sellers.

So I said we're gonna be collaborative, not competitive, And we're gonna have an open door concept where people can talk. We're gonna provide state of the art training so that people can learn [00:06:00] to be more representative of their clientele, to be to build relationships.

And

You know this Don better than anyone.

Creating relationships is a real gift. It is an honest gift and not everybody can do it. It's true, right? We have 2,500 real estate agents in this city of Wichita. Whoa. That's a lot. I don't know if you've ever tried to hire that skillset, but when you try to hire someone who's helpful, someone who cares deeply about other people, That's hard to find.

Yes,

it's, Yeah. I

Don Sherman: I tried to do that with Ebony, so I had to go with the next in line, so

it's what, it's, that is horrible.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: But no, that is important. So it is. Cindy, can you maybe back up and tell our listeners, so is there a difference between an agent, a broker, realtor, I mean, like, let's,

let's [00:07:00] dive deep into what this

Cindy Carnahan: industry

looks like. So

maybe

start

from

that.

Okay. The real estate industry, you must have a broker's license in order to manage people and manage an office.

So I have a broker's license. I am not the managing broker of my office as I, that's not my unique ability. But I decided I needed the broker's license. So an agent then works underneath a brokerage, okay? And there's lots of laws that have to do with advertising. You must advertise your broker's name along with your own name, okay?

And the broker's name has to be a certain size on the Hmm. advertising.

Wow.

Don Sherman: Not

Cindy Carnahan: Not buying print,

huh?

Right, exactly. So, there's the National Association of Realtors and then our state and local board of realtors and we [00:08:00] all have to adhere to the code of ethics, and we have standards of performance that we're supposed to adhere to, but beyond that, we're independent contractors.

So unlike Evergy, you can go in and tell your employees what you want them to do as long as it's legal. They will, they will. will be told to do it.

Well, in the residential real estate business, everyone's an independent contractor. You can ask them to conform to the code of ethics, to the standards of being a realtor of rules that involve your own brokerage firm.

But you can't tell 'em really what to do.

So that makes it a little, yeah. Makes it a little more difficult. Makes it really important to make sure you're hiring the right people that, that get your culture right.[00:09:00] So for instance, in the Carnahan Group is a team of people that have come together to share technology and support staff and ideas, marketing, and they have come together with a set of rules, all of our own that we adhere to. We wanna be, one of the things I say, I wanna be happy, healthy, helpful, and humble. Honest and grateful all day. Wow. If can get that done. I'm good?

Don Sherman: You're good.

What was was that again? Healthy,

Cindy Carnahan: happy healthy.

Don Sherman: Happy,

Cindy Carnahan: healthy

helpful and humble. And they're in order. I wanna be happy, healthy, helpful and humble. Honest and grateful all day.

Don Sherman: You threw a G in there.

Cindy Carnahan: I had to because gratitude's so important. So, we've really. The Carnahan Group has had a [00:10:00] wonderful run, and we're excited to be the number one team in the city.

is amazing. In

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: South central kansas. Yeah. So the Carnahan group, can you, now you've kind of broken down, the brokerage and the individual agency agents, so you've created a group and you talked about earlier company owned store.

Can you talk to us, what does that that mean, per se?

Cindy Carnahan: So what ReeceNichols wanted, first of all, ReeceNichols is the largest real estate brokerage in Kansas and Missouri, so they didn't have a presence here in Wichita. So they wanted me to open a division of ReeceNichols out of Kansas City.

And I said no. And when they asked me if I wanted to do a franchise, that means I own it and I can call the shots. Wow. Along with my two partners, Brandon Baker and Rochelle Knotts. So I never thought I'd get that opportunity to grow something from the [00:11:00] ground up. And it's been so much fun. It's been so much fun.

We, our goal was to have 50 agents within the first three years.

We have 126 agents and five offices. And it's just been really fun. Really fun to watch.

Don Sherman: So was it just a franchising that really made you say, I will do this, or even after you decided to do it?

Was there any trepidation? Were you scared to make this move? What all went into it besides them

saying, you own it, or was that it? or was that that it?

Cindy Carnahan: Well, change is great. You go first. It's

right.

It is frightening, right? It is frightening. I wanted to see if I could do it. Okay. I wanted to see if I could do it.

I wanted a challenge. I'm very entrepreneurial. I've started a lot of things. I like to do new things. I'm not afraid of change.[00:12:00] I went over to the waterfront, my broker said, you'll have to buy a phone system. And

I said,

Yes, I absolutely will have to buy a phone system.

Wow.

So, but it was fun and I really believed in the people that I was doing it with. Okay. I believe they knew how to do the things that I don't know how to do. The Carnahan group has always adhered to the Kolbe test in order to get the type of people we want that have unique abilities that we don't have.

So I, I don't need anymore Cindys, we got Cindy covered, correct. But the Kolbe test, I'll just bring this up and you can use it if you want it, but the Kolbe test, Kathy Kolbe maintains that we spend the majority of our lives trying to be moderately better at the things we're not good at.

Don Sherman: Moderately better.

Cindy Carnahan: moderately better.

And we do this to our school-aged children too. We're [00:13:00] asking them to get moderately better at the things they're not good at. So the problem with that is you end up with moderately good. Weaknesses instead of finding out what people's unique abilities are and putting those people into a career path to put them into a set of things that they're so good at, they don't wanna stop.

So when you look up at the clock and it's 1:00 AM and you're doing something that you wanna keep doing.

You're probably working within your unique ability.

When I put everybody in my office into their unique ability, I have to tell 'em when to go home. Yeah. because they love to do what they're doing.

They're not trying to get moderately better, they're the best. Right. And so, I always say my clientele doesn't really they're not impressed with what I do [00:14:00] unless I anticipate what they need, if they have to ask for it. They want me to anticipate their every need.

And if really good at something, you can,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah.

Don Sherman: Nice. So when did you start the Carnahan group?

Cindy Carnahan: I'm gonna say about, maybe 25 years ago.

ago

Don Sherman: Okay. And Brandon had been with you almost all that time. right?

Cindy Carnahan: He has been with me 18 years.

Don Sherman: Okay. remember that.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: For for our listeners, who is Brandon?

Cindy Carnahan: Brandon Baker runs the Carnahan group. Okay. And gives me a paycheck, which I just love that about him.

Oh,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Thank you Brandon.

Don Sherman: Yeah.

Cindy Carnahan: And he really is a tremendous individual. Has a very deep care for people. He got the best of his mom and dad. He really is a tremendous person.

Don Sherman: One last question before we go to break.

Superman, Clark,

her son.

Yeah. Yeah.

We see each other at Livingston's every, [00:15:00] not every Saturday, but just about.

But but uh, you give him the tough love onboarding like your dad gave you to come into the business?

Cindy Carnahan: I think he gave to me.

Don Sherman: Oh.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Oh,

wow.

Don Sherman: Wow. Clark's not here. He can't defend

Cindy Carnahan: He, he's his own person and it was really interesting training him to be a realtor. It wasn't easy because I love him so much. I wasn't as tough on him as I maybe was on other people, but he taught me so much.

I'm not sure who taught who more

Right.

About staying current. Just staying current. And he's not shy.

Right.

And he's really, he cares deeply about people. This is a cute story about him. One of the times I realized that he had it was he went to Park Lane Towers and a man had asked him to come list their apartment in Park Lane Towers and he went,[00:16:00]

Older gentleman and he had a model of an airplane sitting on his desk that Clark mentioned and he said, well, that's the airplane I used to fly. And the next time Clark went, it was in pieces must have fallen to the floor. And Clark said, do you have a little box? And the man said, sure. And he scooped up all the pieces and he put 'em back together.

Whoa. Wow.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That's when you That's when I knew.

Don Sherman: Break time, E. That's great.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That's, that's a great story.

All right, friends, we're gonna hear a word from our sponsors and we'll be back to hear more

with Cindy and the Carnahan group.

[00:17:00]

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: All right, friends, we are back with Cindy and the Carnahan Group. Cindy. Now most people, I mean, you're well known. Everyone in Wichita and south central Kansas knows who you are.

I guarantee it.

Cindy Carnahan: Well, I hope so. I've I've made a real effort at trying that's the case.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: They know your name. Wow.

And

So. but we know you for more than just being a realtor, right. We know you for your service through Rotary, and we know you for the beautiful flowers on Douglas.

woo woo. Yes. So let's talk about that effort on Douglas.

Like what made you decide that you need to beautify this area and I'm gonna do it with flowers. flowers

Cindy Carnahan: Well, I came outta Century two after music theater one night and I looked around and I said, oh my goodness, we gotta do something down here.

[00:18:00] This is bad. I don't know what we're gonna do, but we're gonna have to do something. I sold Jeff Fluhr, his house, and Jeff and I are good friends and I told him the next time I saw him, I said, Jeff, we have to do something downtown. This is, apparently, this is a. We've got to fix it.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Did you say it.

Did you say it just like

Cindy Carnahan: Uhhuh?

Well, there were some other

Don Sherman: Ah,

Cindy Carnahan: colorful words that came in.

Don Sherman: but this is

Cindy Carnahan: I said, listen, this is not working. We can't have this. And he laughed and he said, well, as luck would have it, the city just bought 120, 114 pots. And I believe now they do belong to you. And if Jeff, as I know Jeff, and I said

Okay.

All right, I'll take care of that. Do I have any money? And he said, we have a little money. We don't have enough money, but we have a little money. So, I went to Letha and Norman Hein, they have Hein Lawn and [00:19:00] Landscaping service, and they've worked for me for 30 years. And I'm a gardener. I love to garden.

And so I went to them and I. Will you guys do this? And they said we'd like to be a part of it. Then I decided, well, I gotta have some gardeners, I gotta have some people, I gotta have some volunteers. So I went to the extension service and they really wanted an educational piece in order to get involved. And I didn't need education. I needed people to dig holes. So I wrote a little thank you to the, I can't remember her name, at the extension service and copied, and it was on an email, so it copied all the master gardeners. And that next day at Rotary, Hugh Nicks walked up to me and said, I understand you.

Gardeners to help you with the pots on Douglas. [00:20:00] And I said, yes, I do. He said, I wanna help. Now Hugh Nicks he does exactly what he says he's gonna do. And so Hugh got a group of master gardeners that wanted to help. And the first year we planted 170. Flats of annuals in the pots. And when we got them planted, there was no water in downtown Wichita.

There

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: planted all these flowers,

had no way to water 'em.

Don Sherman: Concrete jungle.

Cindy Carnahan: way to water 'em. In comes Jason gregory. who. Poor Jason. Jason's been been put in charge of me, so

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Good luck.

That's my homie Jason

Don Sherman: Tough gig there. I'm just saying.

Cindy Carnahan: Well, it is kind of a difficult thing.

So Jason jumped up and said, we're gonna have to get an atv.

We're gonna have to get a water truck. We're gonna have to have water. So he figured it out. [00:21:00] Norman and Letha Hein went down and bought the water truck. It's called the water wagon on the Chisholm Trail. Oh wow. That's what cool. That's nice. And Norman, who's a MacGyver, figured out how to make it work, if you will.

And so we had one place we could fill up with water down by century two.

So you have to fill up that tank seven or eight times a day in order to water all the flowers. Oh, wow. So this year we're going to have the ability to fill it up, I think in two or three places. Okay. And we, and it will fill faster. I'm not sure exactly what they did, but we have, because the labor to wait for that water to get into those tanks is tough.

So, I think this is our [00:22:00] sixth year and we now plant the pots twice a year. We plant them in the early spring. We just plant a hundred, planted 170 flats of pansies and in the middle. This next week, no, I think Thursday we will plant cabbage plants that will grow to fruition and as soon as.

Bear the cabbages, then we will donate those cabbages to the Lord's diner. That's awesome. Or to the zoo. Last year we sent 'em to the zoo. The monkeys love red cabbages so we waste them. Right. The first year we sent them to the Lord's Diner, and I imagine that 114 cabbages would make a lot of salad of

some sort. Yeah.

Yeah. So, wow. And then we plant again in June, and that will last until October. The volunteers plant and the [00:23:00] volunteers remove all the plant material. We have to change the pots, usually the dirt. We'd like to change the dirt every year because it really makes a difference. To mention the fact of what people pour

in

to. Yeah. It's not good.

So, I was just in Gridiron, I don't know if you went to Gridiron, but about flowers on Douglas.

Oh, really? Ah-huh. Whoa.

Yeah. They wanted me to sing a song about the plants that being

stolen.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I heard,

that

you

had

some

interesting

lyrics.

Cindy Carnahan: I did.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Let's hear a little bit of that.

Cindy Carnahan: You don't want that

Don Sherman: Didn't want that out there. Okay.

Cindy Carnahan: Yeah.

no, it's not that. It's not that. The lyrics are funny. One of the lines said, this is not thc. baby's will not get you high.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Yeah. That's the one I heard about. [00:24:00] That

Cindy Carnahan: is awesome.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Because they do

Cindy Carnahan: you,

the.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: the

plants somehow

Cindy Carnahan: come

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: missing.

Cindy Carnahan: They are missing. And so we have to order extra that we keep in a greenhouse to bring in and replant. But last year we lost two hanging baskets. We now, their fourth year, we were able to do hanging baskets. And treetop nursery donates those plants and the growing of those plants. Those plants are under growth now and will be until the 1st of June, and then we'll hang those up. But somebody stole two hanging baskets year. Now imagine they're about 15 feet off the ground.

Mm-hmm. you Even get up there to do do that? I don't know. You have to make a plan.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I

Cindy Carnahan: I It was not just, oh, here,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: let's

let's just

Cindy Carnahan: go do this. Yeah. because they weigh 40 pounds a piece.

Right. Oh

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Wow.

Cindy Carnahan: So those types of things are [00:25:00] upsetting people. I was down here one night and I traveled Douglass every day looking at the pots and just making sure nothing's going down or something's wrong. At any rate, there was a woman with a tripod. And her daughter was sitting in the middle of the pot.

I think they were taking senior pictures. Oh my gosh. I said, John, pull over. He said, no. He no.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I'm not.

I

Don Sherman: pulled in.

Cindy Carnahan: Nope.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Thank you, John. I'm so

Don Sherman: You, John.

Cindy Carnahan: I said, pull over.

Don Sherman: Oh

my God,

Cindy Carnahan: right now

Don Sherman: over. Oh, you did it.

Cindy Carnahan: He did it. I got out of the car and I walked back to the pot. And I looked at them and I said, I planted every single one of these flowers, you can't sit on them. And the lady was backing up with her tripod and the daughter was getting out of the pot. I picked up the plants that had broken and fallen to the floor and I threw them down and I said, [00:26:00] Thank you. And I turned around and walked off and John got back in the car and he said, thank

you

Don Sherman: Jesus.

Yeah, that was,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I'm sitting here with my hands crossed like, oh my gosh, what's about to happen?

Don Sherman: Wow.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That is wild. And I know we are ending our time here. Yeah. And Don has a couple questions, but I have to ask this. You are such a well-read person and I know that you use

Don Sherman: different

Cindy Carnahan: type

of

business resources.

What

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: are some

of

Cindy Carnahan: the

business resources that you,

well, I mentioned the Kolbe test kolbe.com.

We use it.

it.

If you're getting a group of people together, wouldn't it be nice to know what their unique abilities is? I don't care what they're doing, whether they're in your company or they are on a board of directors. The Kolbe test is something you should do. The other thing I brought you and I tried to buy two, but they only had once, so you can share this.

This is called the gap in the gain. I spent six years in [00:27:00] Toronto going to the Strategic coach.

How many times a year did I go? I went four times a year for six years, and basically it's an entrepreneurial coach. Well, my, my coach has written a book called The Gap in the Gain, and this is, we dissect books in my leadership group at.

The Carnahan group. we also have a book club at ReeceNichols that dissects business books, and this book will change your life.

Oh, wow.

It really, basically, we compare everything to the ideal. The ideal children. The ideal car. The ideal home. The ideal. Everything. The ideal husband, the ideal wife, we compare to the ideal and that throws you into the gap.

And you don't feel successful because you're in the gap. The best [00:28:00] thing to do is stay out of. And realize the best thing is to be in the gain and you're gaining on whatever it is you're trying to do. And this is a wonderful book

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: That's deep.

Cindy Carnahan: And then the other book is called Who, not How I realized that I cannot do everything, so I have to get who's, and I can be their who too. So right now I wanna write a book about my mother and color. Wow.

And she's been a part of my life for 68 years. And so I'm gonna write a book but I'm not gonna write it.

I'm gonna find somebody else to write it.

I don't have time to write it

Don Sherman: Right,

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: right. Nor

do I know

how to

write

Cindy Carnahan: it.

Don Sherman: Right.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Don't hire Don because that not who you want to,

Don Sherman: you know

Cindy Carnahan: what

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: I'm just saying.

Don Sherman: It's time to

go,

Cindy.

Cindy Carnahan: to go. But any rate, Gap the Gain and who not how.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: All right. Thank you for sharing

that.

Thank

you.

Don Sherman: So, as you can see, my life [00:29:00] you dealt with Ebony long enough. So now it's time to be rewarded. We're gonna do some word association.

I'll give you one word to gimme

one

word back. It's not wrong cuz it's your word. Are you

ready?

I'm

Cindy Carnahan: excited.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: All right, we'll see.

Don Sherman: here

we

go. Leader.

Cindy Carnahan: Friend.

Don Sherman: Success.

Cindy Carnahan: Opportunity.

Don Sherman: College

Cindy Carnahan: Wichita state.

Don Sherman: Failure.

Cindy Carnahan: Better.

Don Sherman: Entrepreneur.

Cindy Carnahan: Oh, hold me Down.

Don Sherman: Wichita.

Cindy Carnahan: Home.

Don Sherman: Vacation.

Cindy Carnahan: National parks.

Don Sherman: Hero.

Cindy Carnahan: My dad.

Don Sherman: Yeah. Chamber.

Cindy Carnahan: Governance.

Don Sherman: Family.

Cindy Carnahan: Darling.

Don Sherman: Fun.

Cindy Carnahan: garden

Don Sherman: Yeah, I can see that. Last but not least, you have to tell the truth and I can't [00:30:00] wait for this answer.

I think just good to know this.

Beverage.

Cindy Carnahan: Conundrum Cabernet.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Oh wow.

Don Sherman: There you go, wow. Couldn't wait.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: Very nice.

Don Sherman: Cindy, always pleasure to see you, my friend. Thank you for coming

Cindy Carnahan: through. Thank guys so much. I appreciate the opportunity.

Ebony Clemons-Ajibolade: All right, friends, we've come to the end of today's segment.

Thank you for listening. Thank you for being here. And thank you. Please make sure that you share and like us, and let us know who you wanna hear from next. Till next time.

Don Sherman: Peace.