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Shay Hughes' maternal instincts guide Hughes Marino's corporate philosophy

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Family Friendly BUSINESS

SHAY HUGHES' MATERNAL INSTINCTS PUT FAMILY VALUES AT THE CORE OF HUGHES MARINO'S CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

By Delle Willett



The Hughes Marino corporate family gather in a setting designed by Shay Hughes, the chief operating officer.

“RAISING A FAMILY AND BUILDING A BUSINESS ARE REALLY QUITE SIMILAR. BOTH REQUIRE A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF LOVE, DEVOTION AND TIME. NOT TO MENTION MONEY,”

says Shay Hughes, COO of Hughes Marino—San Diego’s largest and most successful tenant representation firm.

“Love is a strong word to use when you are talking about business, but in our company, it’s true. We’ve created a cul-

ture in which people love who they work with.”

The culture Shay has created is truly one of family, where spouses and children are all part of the equation that makes Hughes Marino an amazing place to work — from the firm’s quarterly retreats where employees and spouses spend the day with best-selling authors and speakers, to the family-style living room, kitchen and game room that the team enjoys on a daily basis in their headquarters. “I took everything I did at home as a homemaker and mother and did the same with our office.”

With two of three kids off to college, Shay was able to become fully involved in the business three years ago. Her impact on the culture of the company has reorganized and

recharged the firm in a way that team members say could have only been accomplished by an experienced homemaker.

“My life has always been about family, and that family now includes our entire company. A little maternal instinct, time management and multi-tasking go a long way in the workplace.”

Recently the company has racked up impressive awards, from Best Commercial Real Estate Company two years in a row, to Best Place to Work, Most Admired Company, Most Trusted Brand, and Coolest Office. Taking care of families is central to the Hughes Marino success story.

Like all families, there are people of different ages and stages, from their 20s to their 50s. Newlyweds to empty-nesters. New parents to grandparents. And as is true in most families, the older, more experienced ones are mentoring the younger ones who are just getting started. “We have a lot of really special relationships here, a lot of best friends,” says Shay.

With a degree in communications from Pepperdine University, Shay has no formal business training. But she picked up a lot watching her father progress from being a night-time dishwasher at the Coronado Chart House restaurant to being president of the company, 25 years later with 70 national restaurants.

Hughes’ corporate-culture inspiration came from an experience she had in her formative high school and college years, watching what her father was doing at the Chart House when it was undergoing tremendous growth.

“At the time Chart House had a very family-oriented culture. My dad invited me to go to their annual meetings where everyone in the company came together to hear amazing speakers and best-selling authors. It had a big impact on me.”



“We spent a year and a half developing the core values for our company, making sure they embody us, the team, personally,” Shay says.

Born in Imperial Beach in 1968 to 19-year-old parents, Shay says she and her parents grew up together. “My mother was so adorable. She was from a military family, the high school homecoming queen. And my dad was captain of the football team. He worked as a lifeguard and dishwasher to support our family.”

As part of the Chart House family, Shay moved around a lot, constantly getting uprooted from her friends, and so her parents became her best friends.

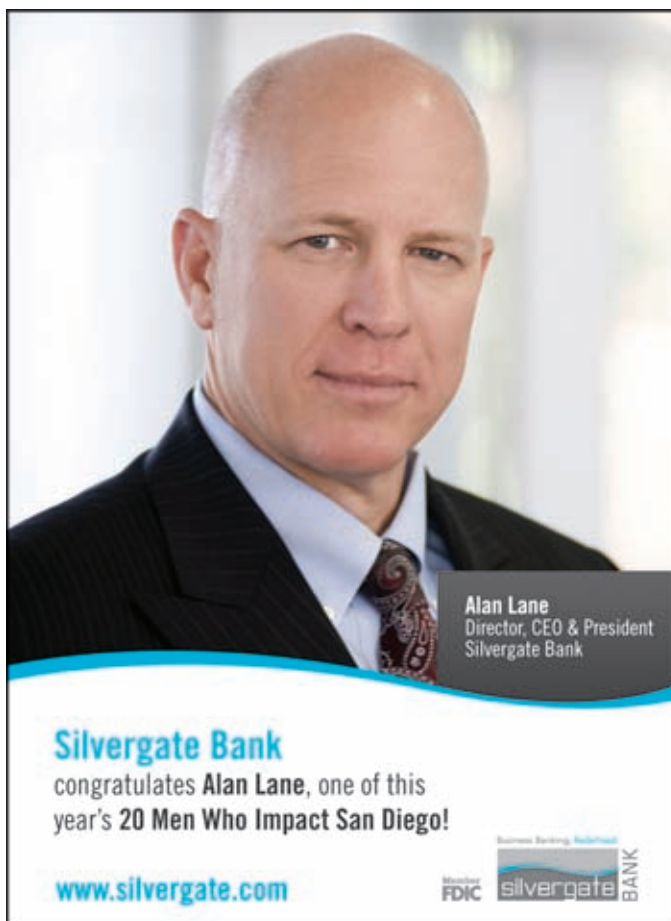
With all the moving, Shay’s mother was a stay-at-home mom. “We moved around so much, she was constantly busy helping our family set up a new home. One year I changed schools three times.”

At Hughes Marino, this woman’s work is never done. Ask her what she does and she will tell you she’s too busy to explain or write it down. But she did provide a snapshot.

A big part of her job is to implement the vision of her husband, Jason Hughes, company founder and an active broker with a tremendous client roster that he’s developed over 25 years. “He has very strong opinions about how to run the company and he has incredible vision that he doesn’t have time to implement,” she says. “That’s where I come in. I also have a vision of my own, but I’ve been the one who implements everything that we’ve been doing.”

Another job is creating the office environment, building a cul-

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Hughes Marino employees gather together frequently, much like a family at the dinner table. Shay Hughes is seated to the left of her husband, company founder Jason Hughes (back to camera).

ture. “We spent a year and a half developing the core values for our company, making sure they embody us, the team, personally,” Shay says.

She collected core values by polling everyone in the company:

- What words do you use to identify who we are?
- Explain what we’re all about as a company.

Core values were consistent across the board. Shay does all the company’s hiring — an intense process. “We hired two people last fall who literally met with every single person in our company before they joined us; at the time there were 27 on staff. We’re very careful as we grow to select good fits for our company.”

The education and professional growth of every staff member is a high priority, and another of her roles. Taking the cue from the Chart House culture, every quarter the entire staff has a company day-retreat, closing the office, putting a “closed” sign on the door and meeting together to hear and learn from different speakers.

And yet another big role is marketing, which she and Jason both love. “We’re both very marketing minded. That’s how we think about things. And I credit Jason for continuing to invest in marketing even when economic times were tough, and others were pushing back on their spending.”

Working with the head of each service line, Shay coordinates between the company’s four different divisions. “There’s an overlap where a lot of our clients are being serviced by one or more of our four divisions,” she says. “I make sure they are communicating so they know what the others are doing, making sure to integrate our efforts and service.”

Shay also works with the director of finance on the financial operations of the company, and attends to the many needs of their newly renovated building. “We also host a number of charity events so there’s everything that’s involved with events: catering, entertainment, and more. Then there’s the never-ending, always-changing technology.”

Formed in February 2011, Hughes Marino had two divisions: Tenant/Buyer Representation and Construction Management. Their two new divisions are Enterprise Zone Tax Credit Services

10 CORE VALUES OF HUGHES MARINO:

Always do the right thing.

Deliver excellence in everything we do.

Enjoy the journey.

Embrace the family spirit.

Build lasting relationships based on trust.

Nurture your personal and professional life.

Pursue growth and learning.

Generously give to others.

Proactively communicate with everyone.

Be authentic, grateful, and humble.

and Lease Audit Services. Shay integrated those service lines and how they operate.

They are also growing geographically, with Shay heading up expansion into Orange County and Los Angeles. “We’re planning to grow our business organically,” she says. “Jason and I will be leading the offices there. We plan to have high-quality people who represent what we represent go up there and have our team meetings like we do here.” At the same time, San Diego will remain the hub and their main focus.

Shay and Jason met at a conference in Boston in 1985 before starting their freshmen year at college. Coincidentally, both were enrolled at Principia College in Illinois. But, with Jason being from the Bay Area, and Shay from San Diego, and wanting to get back to their California roots, they transferred to Pepperdine in Los Angeles after their freshman year.

A month after graduation they got married and, in spite of best-laid plans, their family started right away, with three children in their first five years of marriage — Star, Tucker and Bailey, Shay’s pride and joy.

Star and Tucker, both University of San Diego grads (Star with an MBA and Tucker with a master’s degree in real estate), work at Hughes Marino, while Bailey is finishing up high school this year and on his way to USC Film School.

Shay and Jason believe their kids will grow into their roles someday for the rest of their career. “They love what the company is about and it’s what they have grown up with at the dinner table.”

“We’ll see how it continues to unfold,” says Shay. “I used to want certainty but I’ve learned that I don’t need it anymore. Just knowing we are doing the best we can today and good things will come from that, whatever they may be...It’s kinda fun actually!”

Headquartered in Downtown San Diego, Hughes Marino serves the entire Southern California region. Unlike most commercial real estate firms, Hughes Marino only represents tenants, never landlords, so they never have a conflict of interest in representing their clients.