

SAMUEL LEEDS' SUCCESS STUDENTS



VOLUME 6

INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth volume of Samuel Leeds' Success Students, celebrating another 30 case studies of people who invested in their property education and are now enjoying the life-changing benefits.

Their backgrounds and ages vary, but they all have one thing in common. They have harnessed the creative strategies which Samuel and his coaches teach to grow their wealth.

Some are deal sourcers who sell lucrative investment opportunities. Others rent out HMOs or serviced accommodation without even owning the properties. Many combine strategies or focus on acquiring cash-giving assets.

Methods such as buy, refurbish, refinance and lease option agreements allow these smart entrepreneurs to build impressive property portfolios.

Each of the investors featured in this book graduated from the Samuel Leeds Academy and were interviewed for his Winners on a Wednesday YouTube series.

So far more than 300 men and women, who went before them, have appeared on the platform. They are cast-iron proof that with hard work, dedication, perseverance – and importantly the right education – anyone can be successful in the industry.

By establishing a passive income for themselves, they have acquired the precious commodity of time – time to be with their families and pursue their dreams. They are also building generational wealth to pass on the fruits of their labours to their children.

Throughout these students' trials and tribulations, the trainers and mentors were ever-present, offering one-to-one advice and earning themselves five-star reviews on Google and Trustpilot.

In fact, by every measurable standard, an overwhelming majority of academy members have expressed their satisfaction with the service received.

When surveyed, 98.1 per cent of students said they were satisfied or very satisfied with gaining new knowledge and skills. The same percentage applied to learning by taking part.

That ringing endorsement was echoed in every category, with nine out of ten trainees giving the academy a huge thumbs-up. They were delighted with the overall training, the amount of content that is provided, how it is delivered and how easy it is to understand.

Significantly, most of those questioned agreed that the academy helped them to widen their property network. And it put money back in their pockets. By signing up to the year-long programme, the likelihood of them becoming financially free increased four-fold compared to attending the one-day crash course. To be clear, that means all their bills are covered by their real estate earnings.

From high-fliers who gave up well-paid jobs to go into property to individuals who overcame social anxiety to blossom, these are their compelling and inspiring accounts.

'Property is the second-best investment you can make. The best is in yourself' – Samuel Leeds

ABOUT SAMUEL LEEDS

When Samuel Leeds' children grow up, he has no intention of just drip-feeding them with money to live lavish lifestyles. Instead, the multi-millionaire property developer and trainer will be handing them a far more valuable gift – the knowledge they need to prosper through their own efforts.

Their education has already begun with lessons in financial literacy. He is their teacher and they his pupils at a school which he has funded in Beaconsfield.

Sitting alongside them in a classroom situated in a private family garden are their cousins who are learning about business with them.

The founder of Samuel Leeds Education has taught thousands of adults from all over the world about property and finance and is determined to start early with his own brood.

Just like his students on the academy, the five to 12-year-olds will be learning about good and bad debt, how taxes and mortgages work, and how to invest their money. The curriculum will also include traditional core subjects delivered by two qualified teachers.

The opening of the school demonstrates the importance Samuel attaches to giving his four children the tools to amass wealth. The state education system, he believes, is geared more towards teaching youngsters how to become employees, rather than encouraging them to be their own bosses.

His own entrepreneurial journey began as a teenager. Living on a council estate in Walsall, he made money by selling magic tricks to his classmates and having several paper rounds.

After leaving school at 16, he worked as a letting agent briefly before realising he could earn far more in business.

In 2009, just before his 18th birthday Samuel acquired his first property for £100,000 which was £20,000 below the market value. As he was too young to obtain a mortgage, he persuaded his stepfather to take out one for him. At the time, one could buy a house with a bridging loan, refinance the property with a mortgage and then repay the bridging loan, all on the same day.

After refinancing the house up to its true value, which released capital, Samuel paid off the loan and made a profit of £950 a month from renting it out.

More shrewd deals followed, making Samuel a property millionaire by the age of 21. Each time he creatively structured his acquisitions using strategies, like buy, refurbish, refinance, lease options, and taking on commercial developments as his portfolio grew. The young entrepreneur also had a property deal sourcing company.

Then, in 2014, Samuel set up Training Kings, a networking organisation bringing together Christians like him who were also entrepreneurs.

Describing how it evolved, he said: “A lot of people within my church, even my pastor, judged me for being a Christian in business. So, I set up Training Kings as a mission project.

“It was all about empowering and inspiring Christian entrepreneurs to say you know what I can build a business. I can be successful and even though I’m a Christian, it’s okay – because a lot of people who are Christians in business feel guilty about wanting to be successful.”

Branches opened all around the country, with workshops on various related topics. By far the most popular workshops were those which Samuel ran on real estate investing.

That led to the launch, in 2016, of his training business, now named Samuel Leeds Education which operates the academy.

As a YouTube influencer with 500,000 plus followers on his social media, Samuel is regularly stopped in the street by people who have seen his videos and love his energy. His one-day crash courses are also hugely popular, attracting individuals from all over the world. Many go on to sign up for advanced training. In 2024, Samuel and his team of experienced coaches mentored students from 43 countries.

His ethos of collaboration, not competition, has spawned a community of property investors who give each other help and advice. They often form joint ventures and extend their academy membership to network and give back in some way – whether that be giving talks about their experience, acting as mentors in their field or helping their guru with his charitable work in Africa.

Samuel encourages his academy students to harness the power of giving back when they become rich.

As his own worth has rocketed, so too have his efforts for charity. He has completed three major projects in Uganda, resulting in him having a new school, a separate school hall and a hospital wing named after him.

He describes the opening of a 72,000 sq. ft. orthopaedic ward with 64 beds at the Jinja Referral Hospital as one of his most meaningful ventures. He was once a patient himself at the hospital where he underwent emergency surgery after an accident on the River Nile on a previous trip.

Samuel shattered his kneecap in four places and lost a quarter of his blood after being flung from a raft and plunging down a waterfall. The reconstructive surgery on his knee was an outstanding success and enabled him to walk again. However, he saw the desperate need for bigger and better facilities.

“There was hardly any space to move, and apart from Dr Namusoke, my guardian angel who so skilfully operated on me, there were no other orthopaedic surgeons on site.

“The Samuel Leeds Ward will be filled with new doctors, nurses and resident surgeons all reporting to her. Attending the opening ceremony was one of the most uplifting experiences of my life,” he said.

While in Uganda, the businessman also had the honour of opening the new school which he funded. At the core of the curriculum is the teaching of entrepreneurial skills. Samuel believes the school, which is an hour’s drive away from Jinja, will prove life-changing for many people.

“I have complete faith that pupils at this school will go on to achieve massive business success and wealth. That will also be brilliant for the country as a whole and I am confident they will want to help other Ugandans, as I have done.”

“Just like the hospital, I pray it will be a legacy which will prove vital for people for many generations to come.”

The Samuel Leeds School is not the first educational establishment Samuel has financed in Uganda. After visiting the Bulubandi Primary School in Iganga, he was appalled by the state of the building and pledged to do something about it.

As a result, the new Samuel Leeds School Hall was constructed and has attracted hundreds of children from outlying villages. The school now boasts nearly 2,500 pupils who will be taught financial literacy and other business skills as part of their studies.

Samuel is determined to see the UK school curriculum being changed on similar lines. It is so far proving an uphill battle, but he remains committed to the cause.

“While senior education ministers in Uganda have seen the light, the UK remains in the dark and I have faced constant brick walls. However, I will never give up on trying to change things in this country too.”

Still only 34, the compassionate capitalist is in no doubt about how he wants to be remembered:

"When I die I hope people will look at what I did, and say, wow just look at all the people whose lives were changed. I also hope that all the students we have empowered to become wealthy share the same aspiration and pass on the baton to ensure future generations continue to benefit."

Samuel Leeds

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CHAPTER 1 – DAVID FORD AND KATIE CRACKNELL

Couple become property millionaires while working full time and bringing up a young child

After a day's work a lot of couples sit down in front of the television to relax. Not so David Ford and Katie Cracknell. They spend their evenings looking for properties to buy and rent out.

When they appeared on *Winners on a Wednesday*, Samuel Leeds described them as the king and queen of the buy, refurbish, refinance strategy. After completing his training David and Katie 'splashed the cash,' acquiring eight houses to add to the two they already owned.

They became property millionaires in just three years while working full time and bringing up their young child and now own 11 houses, including the one they live in.

David and Katie, who are in their thirties, bought their first investment property before knowing anything about the BRR method. Their plan was to simply rent it out to provide themselves with a retirement pot.

“We didn’t know much when we bought our first one, but we knew to buy the worst house on the best street. That’s what we did for the house we lived in. Three years later we managed to pull about £70,000 equity out of it. That was how we started,” recalls David.

After completing their first project and enjoying it, Katie suggested they get some property training. Searching online, they came across Samuel Leeds’ videos about property investing on YouTube.

“We thought his videos were brilliant. We learned a lot. We got a bit obsessed. Every time we came in from work, we were eating dinner and watching him,” says David.

Once they had ploughed their way through all the online material, the couple came to the live events and then paid for more training.

“Our approach is we buy rundown properties – the stinkier the better as we learnt on Samuel’s training – and then we push the value up. We pride ourselves on giving nice refurbs. We like the extra finishing touches,” David explains.

When the work is finished, they remortgage the property to its new value, releasing funds to buy another house. This process can be repeated endlessly.

Before each purchase, Katie and David perform viability checks to make sure there is enough profit in the deal. The first step is to calculate the likely gross development value once the property has been improved.

This is estimated by using the square footage as a benchmark to find out how much houses of a similar size are selling for within a mile radius of the location. After deducting the refurbishment cost, the purchase price and the legal fees this gives a good indication of what profit to expect.

They need to achieve a minimum margin of 25 per cent to obtain finance for a deal. One advantage is that Katie works for her family’s kitchen,

bedroom and bathroom manufacturing business which means she can get competitive prices on products. They also benefit from being able to tap into the firm's knowledge and expertise on the fittings side, as well as Katie's project management experience.

Some of their houses are in the Midlands and others in Wales. Katie says: "The ones in Wales we've sourced purely because it's easier to source them rather than driving all the way to Wales and doing the viewings. We still do research if we get sent a deal."

They bought their Midlands properties mainly through approaching the owners directly. One of these purchases came about in unusual circumstances and led to them clinching a cluster of deals.

As property investors, David and Katie are continually on the lookout for opportunities. David was out walking his dog one day when he spotted a cardboard for sale sign in a window. So, he got in touch with the vendor.

It transpired that the seller had lost his son and no longer wanted the house. "He didn't have the heart to be a landlord any more. Then he said, 'I'm selling two more on the same street.' They were round the corner from where we lived. He never said what he wanted, so we offered £75,000 per property. Then he said he wanted £80,000 per property. We thought that was a fair deal.

"So, we secured three properties in one go from a cardboard cut-out."

More properties came their way, thanks to Katie. She was working on one of their sites when she saw there were two houses next to each other across the road which also looked in need of attention. Feeling she had nothing to lose, she dropped a note through the letterboxes expressing an interest in buying them.

Although she did not expect a reply, it emerged they were both owned by the same person. "I didn't expect anything back. A week later the owner

rang me. We've had your letter. We're interested in selling. Great. So now we own five on one road."

All five are in Borrowash, near Derby and within walking distance of their house.

In their experience the best deals are those which have not been listed on the internet as there is so much competition from other buyers.

David says: "Sometimes for us it might be worth waiting a bit longer just to get an off market one. Even if it means sending out 300 speculative letters, there is the chance of getting 'one winner.'

The entrepreneurs agree with their mentor-in-chief Samuel that once trained in property you cannot drive anywhere without stopping the car to look at a derelict or vacant building. They keep letters in the glove box which they have written in advance to give to owners in case they see an opportunity.

"It's a direct to vendor letter saying we're interested in your property. If you don't want to sell it now, it doesn't matter. Keep this in your drawer and if you need it in two years come and speak to us. There's no pressure," David emphasises.

Katie says it is surprising how many people have a property they no longer want. She and her partner negotiated a lease option on a house in Leicester which another 'tired' landlord offered them.

It gives them the option to buy the property, which is near the university in Leicester, at a later stage. The agreement is that they pay the mortgage on it for five years and take care of the maintenance, apart from any roof repairs or structural issues that might occur.

Explaining how the deal is structured, David says: "If there's not a tenant there they don't have to worry. We're paying the mortgage fee regardless.

It's on us to get a tenant. We also look after the insurances and the contract. So, for them they've got no worries.

"We've agreed a fixed price in five years. If the market goes up or down, we pay that fixed price, but we've done our due diligence in the area. We know that the growth's good."

The purchase price in five years is £150,000, with a deposit of £1,000 to pay to legalise the agreement. The monthly mortgage payments amount to £535, and they anticipate renting it out for £900 to £1,000 per month.

"It's a good deal and we've still got a couple of hundred pounds to put towards the deposit," says Katie, adding that comparable properties are selling for £180,000.

The BRR investment which sticks in David's mind is the two properties which Katie found. The owner bought them with the intention of doing them up, but then decided to sell them.

It took a year, however, to complete the sale after a series of unexpected delays which resulted in them having to pay an additional £1,000 to secure the mid-terraced houses. Katie and David knew it was worth it because they bought each one for £80,500 and then refinanced them at £170,000 per property. Each refurbishment cost £40,000.

They acquired the houses in Derby with a bridging loan and obtained development finance for the work. The deposit was about £40,000 for them both.

David says it was a learning curve for them as they were expecting to receive the development funding in set increments which turned out not to be the case.

"I don't know if we weren't informed properly or didn't understand properly but it worked out that they were only going to give us a

percentage of what the property was worth at a certain stage. Luckily, we had a buffer and we kept going,” Katie says.

Their persistence paid off. After both houses were given a full ‘back to brick’ refurbishment the new valuations left them with a profit on paper of £100,000 for four months’ work. Instead of selling up, they chose to let them through their company, D K Rental Properties.

Katie adds: “We wanted to keep the asset and capital growth, as well as the monthly cash flow. Each one rents out for £875.”

The partners also got back their £40,000 deposit after remortgaging the properties and were able to pay off the development and bridging finance.

They snapped up another terraced house across the street for £80,000. With mould in the bedrooms, it was uninhabitable and so there was no stamp duty to pay. After renovating it for about £10,000, and forking out an extra £2,600 on associated costs, the value doubled.

“That one got revalued at £160,000. We knew the area very well. It is a great area for equity,” David reveals.

They pulled out 75 per cent of the £160,000 valuation from the refinance which gave them all their money back, in addition to a tax-free sum of £24,000 to reinvest.

David and Katie love the BRR strategy because of the equity it unlocks and the rental income it generates. “The cash flow is good. The lowest is about £200. Anything less we wouldn’t go near. We’ve got one in Wales where the cash flow is £640 [per month]. It varies,” says David.

In total, their assets are valued at around £2m. With a toddler to look after and working full time, they both have busy schedules.

Katie, who was pregnant when she started her property training, says time management is essential.

“Once a week we’ll sit down and say what our aims are for this week. Then we say Monday night we’re doing this, Tuesday night that and so on.”

David, a team leader with Rolls-Royce Submarines in Derby, keeps the calendar on his phone, marking off tasks in green when they have been completed.

He found Samuel’s training techniques suited him. “I’m in a corporate world where everything’s got to be politically correct. His training was straight to the point. That was new and refreshing for me to see that style of learning.

“If you’re not performing, he’ll tell someone they’re not performing, or you need to do this. That’s how I learn best.”

Katie says she and David work well as a property duo. “I’m like go get, whereas David is like hold on Katie double check this or smell the roses a minute and then we’ll go. That’s why we’re a good team.”

They are in the process of adding two extra bedrooms to a three-bedroom house in Porth, Wales. They bought it for £80,000, after agreeing a five-year contract with the local council to provide social housing.

With the refurbishment expected to cost £35,000 and an end value of at least £172,000, Katie and David hope to again recycle their returns. They are also exploring other development ventures in Wales, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire which could lead to them offering more supported living, as well as family homes.

Samuel is impressed with David and Katie’s achievements and believes they will go far. He says: “They are finding some brilliant deals and are now looking to scale up by tackling much bigger developments in partnership with other investors. I think they have a fantastic future ahead of them because they have a real thirst for knowledge and are always prepared to take action.”

DAVID AND KATIE'S TIPS

“You need to be educated in property.”

“Work hard and learn to manage your time well.”

“We only refinance a property when we know the rent is going to more than cover the mortgage payments.”



CHAPTER 2 – CRAIG AND BECCA COOMBES

Husband and wife choose paying for the academy over fixing their roof

Everyone has choices in life and whatever decision we make can have profound implications for our future. Craig Coombes and his wife Becca had to pick between fixing the roof on their house or joining the academy. They could not afford to do both. So, they plumped for the latter and have never regretted it since.

Even though part of their roof still needed patching up, that choice enabled them to build a property business which gave them a solid foundation to create generational wealth long after they are gone.

The couple provide serviced accommodation in Hertfordshire and top up their income by sourcing deals in the housing market for investors. As a result, they enjoy a lifestyle which offers them far more freedom and flexibility than they had before becoming entrepreneurs.

It was Craig who set them on a different course. He was working in the IT sector as a customer service manager when he began looking at alternative ways of making a living to avoid the rat race.

“I always thought there must be another way other than just doing a nine to five. I looked at anybody who’s had success and what they do, and regardless of what industry they were in, they always had a percentage of their wealth in property.

“That got me down the route of seeing Samuel on YouTube and from there getting my wife involved.”

Craig took the first step by attending a Discovery Day at Samuel Leeds’ house in the autumn of 2022. He remembers feeling out of place as there were people in the room who were already successful in property and had multiple apartments.

“I thought what am I doing here? I’m in completely the wrong place. This is not for me.”

He shared his discomfort with one of the coaches who asked him what he did for a living. When Craig replied that he was a customer success manager in IT, he said: ‘No, you’re in exactly the right place. You’re good with numbers.’

Craig found out later that this was Samuel’s mentor, Tony Crook, who has made millions of pounds from property.

At that point, Craig knew nothing about property investing and had approached the day with a certain amount of scepticism.

“I’d heard Samuel say how you could manage a property without any of your own money. I was sceptical but I thought, that’s interesting, I want to find out a bit more about this.”

After the event he spoke to his wife Becca about what he had seen and learnt and brought her along to the £1 Property Investors Crash Course. They subsequently enrolled on the academy, putting the repair to the roof on the back burner.

It was during Craig's training that he was then made redundant. With a young family to support, it was a huge blow to lose his £85,000 a year salary. However, it turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

One of the biggest challenges for Craig early on was having to juggle his job with his studies.

"I was working 13 and 14-hour days and trying to fit it in in any nook or cranny that I had. It normally would be half an hour or an hour in the evening. When the redundancy came along it allowed me to go through all the training properly and hit the ground running."

Craig was laid off in May 2023 after eight years of working in the IT industry. "It was scary with having two kids as well. There is a commitment there, but it was definitely time to make a change."

Now he would never go back to being employed as he believes having a job is riskier than being in business. "In the IT sector, at the moment, there's a real risk of redundancy. I know from friends who work for huge companies there are job cuts being made left, right and centre."

It took a while for Craig and Becca to clinch their first deal. They had the support of the academy and others who trained on it – including identical twins Gavin and Mitch Vaughan who are successful deal sellers and rent out serviced accommodation in Hertfordshire too.

"We worked with the twins on getting our first deal. They are amazing. They really do help all the academy members," says Craig.

He adds: "Once we got over the line with that first one, it was like a lightbulb moment. This is how it works. A month and a half after that we got our second one."

The couple, who live in South Buckinghamshire, control two serviced accommodation properties in the Watford area, while also working with agents and landlords in London.

In the beginning, they concentrated on the rent-to-rent strategy to become financially independent before branching out into sourcing and selling property deals.

“From August we really started seeing the success come and that’s where I could say I’m out of the nine to five rat race and we can drive this forward.”

As property investors, Craig and Becca are continually looking for all types of deals, whether that be rent-to-rents, holiday lets or potential buy, refurbish, refinance projects. It would be impossible to take on each one themselves, either because they lack the resources or the capacity at that time. It may also be that the property is outside their patch. When that happens, they pass on the deal rather than wasting the chance to make some money.

They either sell deals directly to an investor, or work with another sourcer to align an investor with a particular opportunity.

Explaining the difference, Craig says: “With a direct source to investor you’ll find the deal for them, make sure it fits their requirements, package it all together, give them a clear overview of what the average nightly rate will be and occupancy and what they can expect as an average profit per month.

“With co-deal sourcing it may be that I’ve found a specific deal and another sourcer has got a specific investor whose requirements it fits. We would package that together and split the fees.”

To give one example, the pair had just joint ventured on their second SA and were preparing it for being rented out when another deal came up.

The figures involved made it interesting as a proposition but timewise it was not a match for them and so they decided to sell it.

“It’s a ‘win-win for everyone,’ says Craig.

The training has been integral to their success, giving them the knowledge and practical skills required to become confident professionals.

Craig was especially impressed by the buy, refurbish, refinance course. “It’s full of so much content, and each step is broken down. Even though I haven’t got one today, by all the training I’ve done I feel confident in going ahead with one straight away.”

The couple also learnt how to systemise their SA rental business by establishing a power team. They employ cleaners who act as their ‘eyes and ears’ on the ground, managing the changeovers between guests.

A maintenance man is also available to fix minor problems and they use a channel manager to co-ordinate their bookings on the various websites which they use to advertise their accommodation.

“We can see who’s checking in when and when there needs to be a quick turnover or there is a late checkout. It allows us to have a hands-off approach,” Craig adds.

Listing their properties through many different online travel agencies, such as booking.com LateRooms and Home and Away, increases their chances of securing a rental.

A lot of their customers are relocators who need a place to stay temporarily while between house moves. As part of their education, Becca and Craig were taught how to identify their target market. That involved looking at what was happening in their area and what type of people would come there as a result. That helped them to grow their enterprise and attract longer term bookings.

As their company continues to go from strength to strength, they have more ambitious projects in the pipeline.

“From the deal sourcing side of things, we’ve got a block coming up in London which is for eight apartments and we’re also speaking with someone about another apartment block which is for 74 apartments. That would be co-sourced with another academy member,” reveals Craig.

They are also in discussions with the landlord of one of their furnished accommodation apartments to take on the rest of the block which would give them a total of four properties. And they are considering embarking on their own BRR scheme, with Craig’s father and father-in-law considering coming on board as investors.

From having their doubts at first, like Craig, they became actively involved in property themselves. They helped Craig and Becca stage their serviced accommodation after attending one of Samuel Leeds’ crash courses.

In just one year Craig’s life changed dramatically. He gets to see more of the outside, for one thing. The entrepreneur also chooses when he works, rather than being tied down by set hours.

“Instead of being stuck behind a desk all day, every day, I can pick up my kids from school, spend an hour or so at the park and then adjust it where I’ll work later in the evenings or certain times in the day.”

The couple’s business, C&A Estates, is named after their young children, Curtis and Amelia. Craig hopes that one day they will take over the reins and be even more successful than their parents.

That is one of Becca and Craig’s reasons for wanting to buy their own properties, as opposed to renting them from the owners through their company and then renting them out at a profit.

Before signing up to the academy that was the avenue they wanted to go down until learning about the concept of the fast and slow pound. They

realised that through deal sourcing and rent-to-rents they could produce a quick cash flow – then create generational wealth with the BRR strategy, using either their own or other's people's money.

One of their other challenges initially was with branding. “We'd only been on the academy for a few weeks, and we found some good BRR deals. The returns were 25 per cent. But we hadn't built the brand or networked enough. We couldn't find investors that it would have been a good fit for..”

As one of Samuel Leeds' mentors, Grant Cardone, puts it: 'Contacts equals contracts.'

They took note of that message and made sure they promoted themselves properly. It benefited them being in the academy community where everyone helps each other.

“You want to see everyone being pulled up and have success. It's good.”

Craig believes he has changed as a person. “Now instead of looking at what's there for me, it's how can I add value. You get a good feel factor from it.”

He describes his wife as the 'brains behind the operation,' while he crunches the numbers and closes the deals. Working alongside his wife has made their relationship stronger in some ways, he says.

“We have boundaries where it's like no work time, but then I find that time a bit more special with her. When you're both in jobs you're making someone else rich, whereas when it's your business you benefit from that. Both pulling in the same direction has made us a lot stronger.”

Samuel is impressed by what the partners in life and business have already achieved. He says: “Being a property entrepreneur is one of the most lucrative professions on the planet. So, getting trained properly makes sense. Craig and Becca did well to be at the point where in three months they replaced the average salary which is about £2,000 a month.”

CRAIG'S TIPS

“To be a property entrepreneur you’ve got to get training. You can’t go into this stuff blind. I just think you’re doomed to fail if you do.”

“Focus on networking and building your brand. If people know who you are, it makes it a lot easier to work with them and you’ll find they come to you.”



CHAPTER 3 – HOLLIE LAWRENCE

Mother-of-two who sacrificed a six-figure salary to learn about property builds a £3.2m portfolio

As a human resources director, Hollie Lawrence was at the pinnacle of her profession in a very well-paid job. Then she gave it all up to train to be a property entrepreneur on the academy. Starting from the ground up again, Hollie built a large serviced accommodation business in the Cotswolds, where she lives, in just nine months.

With an annual turnover of close on £250,000, her portfolio is worth around £3.2m and consists of ten furnished apartments and houses which she rents out to tourists and contractors for short stays. Some are properties which the businesswoman owns. Others she either controls or manages for investors.

The mother-of-two decided to go into the industry so that she could spend more time with her children, sacrificing a six-figure salary to dedicate herself to the training. Now she is excited by what the future holds with plans to scale her operation and create something ‘life changing.’

Her story is typical of many professionals who work hard for years and climb the corporate ladder, only to find that it no longer suits their lifestyle.

After graduating with a psychology degree, Hollie was unsure of what she wanted to do but ended up working in HR for 20 years. Initially, she enjoyed the challenge of progressing in her career. As she got towards the top, however, the balance between her work and home life began to shift with a three and five-year-old to look after.

“It was a global role and it never stopped for me. I got to a point where I just wasn’t happy. It wasn’t for me any more. I wanted to be a mum who was present for my children.

“I knew for a while I needed to make a change. I’d always had a passion for property. My husband and I had done a couple of development projects in the past and we’d always said we would do more. But it’s that old cliché, we never found the right time.”

Feeling trapped and increasingly frustrated, matters came to a head after a particularly stressful day in the office. Realising there was more to life, Hollie started googling for information on the rent-to-rent strategy which she had heard about but did not fully comprehend. Then she discovered Samuel Leeds and his YouTube channel about property investing.

One video caught her attention and had a profound effect on her. It showed a Financial Freedom Challenge which Samuel had taken on with Evans Willie.

“It opened my eyes to what was possible. When you see somebody go from almost nothing to financially free in seven days it blows your mind. You think if that person can do it, why can’t I?”

Straight away Hollie signed up to the online training, read Samuel’s books and then came along to one of his crash courses in June 2022. She could not believe that it only cost £1.

“I thought what have I got to lose? It’s one day. Even if I don’t learn anything, I’ve not really lost anything. I learnt so much in that one day. I was absolutely buzzing.”

After completing another course on the buy, refurbish, refinance strategy, she enrolled on the year-long academy programme in the September. Having invested in the academy, Hollie handed in her notice, confident she could be successful with the right education.

It is not what she would advise others to do. Ideally, she would have built up her property business alongside her job. However, with such a busy work schedule, she felt it was the right decision for her.

“The job I had was high pressure, high stress, very long hours. I wouldn’t have been able to give myself the opportunity to be successful if I didn’t say, I’ve got to cut the cord here.”

Hollie threw herself into her training, and yet success did not come quickly. Once more she found herself under pressure, especially being surrounded by students doing well.

“It’s a great environment to be in. It gives you that motivation, but it can be disheartening at times. I’ve had great support from my family but day to day I was working by myself. When you keep getting that ‘no’ it can be difficult to pick yourself up and say this is going to work and keep going,” admits Hollie.

Despite that, people lifted her up, she says. Eventually, after four months she clinched her first rent-to-rent deal. It took another few months before she secured the next one.

“I was in a lucky position. My husband could cover the bills but still you put that pressure on yourself. There was a point where I worried that I’d gone at this too quickly but it turned around.”

She adds: "Once I got that second one, things started to change for me. It gave me the confidence and I was able to progress more quickly. I had that persistence."

Over the next five months Hollie went live with another eight properties. The first one out of this batch is in Moreton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire. With four bedrooms and sitting rooms offering flexible accommodation, it brings in thousands of pounds a month.

When Hollie took on the property, it needed a lot of 'TLC.' She spent about £10,000 on a major renovation carried out over six weeks. The work included putting in a new shower and a sink.

"We have it on a commercial lease for six years. So, we knew we would get our money back. That's why we were comfortable with the investment. It's in a good location right in the centre."

Hollie negotiated a discount on the rent with a two-month grace period. She pays the landlord £1,000 a month and rents it out for £260 to £750 a night, depending on how many guests there are.

"We've got two nightly rates so we can flex it. That maximises our occupancy. Generally speaking, £750 a night is when we have groups of eight to 10. We might let it out for two to four nights at that rate. The rest is at a lower rate.

"The turnover is £6,500 to £7,000 a month and the profit is about £3,000 a month after the bills which includes cleaning."

Hollie had no idea until studying property that she could rent a place on a long-term basis with a commercial agreement.

"When you educate yourself, it opens so many doors. If you don't treat it as a business and put the effort in, it won't make the money you want it to. You've got to put the right systems in place and do your research and marketing.

“If you haven’t got time to do that and you’re going to pass it on, you’ve got to do your due diligence on the person who’s going to market and manage it otherwise it will fall flat.”

The bulk of her portfolio is made up of rent-to-rents and properties which she manages for an investor. Before Hollie became an academy member, she assumed that tourism would be her only market in the Cotswolds.

Hollie found out that in fact contractors, professionals and people relocating to the area also need temporary accommodation.

Certain areas are mainly driven by tourism, and it is a year-round destination. Gloucester, which is on the edge of the Cotswolds, differs in that there is a huge amount of development under way, prompting high demand for accommodation for contractors.

Hollie therefore has several apartments in the city. “We’ve staged them and made sure they’ve got the right facilities that contractors need when on a job. It’s about understanding the market and making sure what we’ve got in those properties is delivering what our guests need.”

With her education and experience gained from having a sizeable portfolio, the entrepreneur has been able to branch out into the lucrative area of property management. She manages serviced accommodation owned by investors as that is her specialist field. There are key advantages compared to the rent-to-rent model, she says.

“The barrier to entry is even lower than if you do rent-to-rent because you don’t have to risk any money. You’re just providing a service.”

Even if the property is not booked up and her client is unhappy, she is not having to pay an agreed rent every month to a landlord. As an established operator in Gloucestershire, she is confident that scenario is unlikely.

“I know the clientele and what people need. In Gloucester I have relationships with businesses that need accommodation. So, I know I can fill those apartments or houses in that area.

“I’ve got a couple of trusted partners. If I’ve got an investor that’s interested in working with us, whether that’s where we manage the property for them and charge a fee for that on a monthly basis, or it’s something else, we can offer an end-to-end service.

“I work closely with people who are able to source those opportunities. I’m able to stage them and then manage them. It can be a complete hands-off for somebody.”

So far there have been no nightmare guests. Hollie has procedures to ensure it remains that way. Guests are asked to produce identification and there are clear policies which state what they can and cannot do.

There are measures specifically aimed at discouraging partygoers, although the Cotswolds does not normally attract younger visitors as an upmarket area.

“We don’t allow one-night stays. That’s important because if you’re going to throw a party where things get broken and neighbours get upset, then you want somewhere for a one-night stay.”

For her city apartments in Gloucester, where there are more likely to be parties, the minimum stay is five nights. “That’s because we’re targeting professionals, contractors, families and people either relocating or working in the area.”

Hollie is constantly searching for more properties to take on as rent-to-rents through her company, Character Stays. She enjoys finding a new property and embellishing it.

“Sometimes I have to pinch myself. I love the design and creating spaces. I’ve always been an advocate of travelling and getting experiences. I love

to visit places with character. Now I have the opportunity to create that for other people.

“In the north Cotswolds the market is primarily tourism. So, I know I’m creating beautiful places for them to come and to create memories with their families.”

A lot of American, Japanese and Chinese tourists visit the region, and during the summer her occupancy is 100 per cent, says Hollie.

She found her first deal on Rightmove, securing it via an agent. The rest were advertised on OpenRent through which she can approach a landlord directly.

Hollie explains the benefits of her business model, including the fact she is offering to maintain the property to a high standard and pay the owner a guaranteed monthly rent.

“It’s all about trust and helping them to understand the value you’re bringing in terms of looking after and investing in their property. They don’t have to worry. There are no void periods, and they don’t have to look for tenants.”

She also built relationships with local estate agents who now pass on opportunities to her.

Her business is systemised which cuts the time spent on the properties which are managed, although she likes to keep an eye on them every day and make sure the guests are satisfied.

Having systems in place gives her more free time. She took the week off to be with her children during their half-term break. She can also pick them up from school and take them to events.

Her next goal is to buy a house, do it up, rent it out as serviced accommodation and then refinance the mortgage to release funds for

further investments. “That’s where my passion’s always been and where I wanted to get to.”

And every day she feels ready to tackle a fresh challenge.

“I wanted to do something I was excited to get out of bed every morning for. I wasn’t excited to get out of bed to do my job. Now I can’t wait to start working on my business every morning. It’s such a change.”

Samuel says: “Cotswolds is an expensive area, but Hollie has understood the market and found her niche. She can now also package and sell deals and develop properties in the area with the knowledge she has and continue to grow the rest of her business.”

HOLLIE’S TIPS

“I always thought it wasn’t the right time to start a property business. There’s never a right time. You just need to get the education and get started.”

“Persistence is so important. You just need one yes to begin with.”



CHAPTER 4 – IAN THOMAS

Plumber increases his cashflow through rent-to-rents and deal sourcing

Tradespeople are out all day working on properties. So, it is perhaps no surprise that some of them start investing in real estate.

Ian Thomas is an example of someone who has made the transition from being a self-employed plumber to earning a side income through renting out accommodation owned by others.

He became financially independent in just eight months after joining the academy and building up a portfolio of rent-to-serviced accommodation properties in Cardiff and Bath. Ian also sells deals, helped by his wife who gave up her job to join him on the property side.

Combining that with being a plumber means long hours. Ian works 60 hours a week on his plumbing and heating business which leaves him with little time to spend with his family.

As the father of two young children explains: “If I’m not in work, I’m not earning money. I am the business.”

He hopes, however, to increase his passive income to free up more of his time and create generational wealth.

“I feel I’m giving up time with my children to invest into this, but I know it’s for a greater cause. I’m looking in the next one or two years to put everything I can into doing property and systemising my plumbing and heating business which is going to give me more time back with my family – so sacrificing time now to gain a lot more time in future.”

Like many other students, it was the £1 crash course which launched him on the path to becoming a property entrepreneur.

“It’s a great environment to be in. You learn so much in that one day that’s enough to get the ball rolling,” says Ian.

Afterwards he booked himself on to some advanced training and then signed up for the academy programme, even though his mother had concerns.

“She said to me before I came for the second lot of training, don’t go spending more money. She was convinced it was a scam.”

Ian went ahead despite the warning. “I knew I was going to join up to the academy because once I’m in something that’s it, I’m in full on.”

Before enrolling he spoke to his wife who supported him. “She said if you think you can do it just go for it. That was all I needed. I joined the academy and haven’t looked back.”

It took him about a month to sell his first property investment deal. During that time, the trainee entrepreneur was continually putting in calls to find opportunities and being rejected by landlords.

Rather than viewing it negatively, he turned it into a game after another academy member confided in him that he had received 300 ‘no’s.’

“I thought that’s my target. I’m going to get 300 no’s and see where we go from there.”

He noted each rejection on a chart in the back of his diary. Then, after 190 refusals, he got seven yeses all at once after negotiating a deal to buy seven apartments. Ian put down deposits to secure the flats and then had to find an investor to purchase them.

As time was of the essence, he passed on the deal to other sourcers who sold it.

“It was time-sensitive, so I thought just co-source with people who’ve done it before me and learn along the way.”

Ian originally intended to take on two of the apartments himself, but there were delays and in the end he had to hand those back.

Ironically, it was because of an accident that the plumber had time to look for deals. He fell off his motorcycle, fracturing one of his vertebrae which forced him to take a fortnight off work.

With an apprentice doing jobs for him, Ian could concentrate on making calls every day until finding the apartments and splitting his commission with the co-sourcers. It was through selling those deals that he had the cash to start renting out furnished properties for short stays.

“I made just over £4,000 on those deals and then I took on a property in Cardiff as serviced accommodation from a deal sourcer.”

The following week he took control of a second apartment in Bath, renting it from the owner and then letting it out at a profit. His portfolio now includes two one-bedroom apartments – one in Cardiff and the other in Bath – a three-bedroom flat in Cardiff, and a two-bedroom house, again in the Welsh capital.

The three-bedroom property was booked up for two and a half months within a week of him taking it on, generating revenue until the new year.

Based on his market research, Ian would never have invested in Cardiff. The occupancy rates for serviced accommodation seemed to be low. When he checked online bookings calendars to assess the demand, they looked empty.

Seeing no reason why his business model would not work, he decided to go ahead anyway. With a theatre, stadiums and lots of construction work going on, Ian was confident of filling his rooms.

“When you get a gut feeling you know it’s going to work you’ve just got to take that plunge sometimes. But I’m still trying to figure out why it looks so bad when you do your due diligence.”

His initial target was to hit an occupancy rate of at least 50 per cent to break even, but soon there were customers queuing up to stay in his properties.

“It went from being 50 per cent to Bath having 100 per cent occupancy in the second month it was live when we had a one-month booking – and Cardiff has been long stay after long stay. I’ve had loads of requests.

“The one-bed in Cardiff I could have filled about four times. At that point you think I need another property. So, I thought I’m going bigger to see if the three-bed works.

“On the bigger properties, obviously, you make more profit. I’m making about £1,800 a month net profit on that one because it’s got a long stay. That’s a full-time salary just off one deal.”

He paid a sourcing fee of £3,000 for the property, plus a deposit of £1,600, and pays the landlord a fixed rent of £1,500 a month.

Most of his guests are contractors and professionals. Five Amazon workers providing cover over the busy Christmas period booked his largest apartment.

Both of his Cardiff rentals are conveniently situated. It takes around half an hour to walk into the centre from the one-bedroom apartment, which has on-street parking available, while the three-bed is ten minutes away on foot.

His business model offers many benefits for landlords compared to a standard let, Ian points out. If tenants damage the property or default on the rent, it may take a lengthy court battle to evict them – whereas he can be shown the door immediately.

“As a company we’ll lease the property normally for three to five years and pay them guaranteed rent. If I don’t pay rent, they can just kick me straight out of the property because I’m a commercial tenant and they get the property back in the same condition or better.”

When a shower broke in one of his apartments in Cardiff, he bought a new one and fitted it.

“That hasn’t cost the landlord a penny. If that was a standard tenant, it might have cost £250. They’re having no unforeseen bills to pay because I’m maintaining the properties. At the end of the day that’s my business and if my property is not in A1 condition, no guests are going to stay there.”

Ian says it can be hard to convince a landlord to hand over their property to a business like his because they are unfamiliar with the rent-to-rent concept. His training gave him the knowledge and the skills to guide the owner through how it works.

He also makes sure there is a break clause in the contract in case the property proves unprofitable. This allows him to hand it back after an agreed period.

Other academy members gave Ian lots of tips when he was starting out. He still speaks regularly to the Property Twins, Gavin and Mitch Vaughan, who trained with Samuel Leeds Education. Another recruit, Teshi Cheema, who turned over £45,000 in one month from sourcing investment deals, also gave him handy advice.

Ian pays it back by passing on his know-how to new students, in the spirit of collaboration that exists in the academy.

When Ian took over his three-bedroom apartment, two others were available in the same block. He worked with a deal sourcer who sold them to two investors on the academy. He is also helping another member with a buy, refurbish, refinance project in Bridgend.

“I’m doing the plumbing and heating in it. It’s just opened up doors that wouldn’t have been possible without joining the academy.”

He adds: “My wife, who has been helping me furnish the properties, is excited to get involved and I’m excited for her to be a part of it as well. We can go on the journey together now.

“Where I’m from in the Rhondda properties are really cheap. It’s a great area for BRRs. There’s a university about 20 minutes away, so I may jump into BRR to HMO. Local to me they’ve upgraded all the train lines, and every 10 minutes there are going to be trains going straight into Cardiff.”

His next goal is to achieve an income of £10,000 a month from rent-to-SAs. “Then I’m going to look to buy properties and replace the rent-to-SAs as they come to the end of the contracts with my own assets to create that £10,000 cash flow.”

His mother is partly why he became involved in property. She and his father built their own house for £55,000 when they were in their twenties.

His dad was later diagnosed with a brain tumour. Before he passed away, he told his wife she always had the house as a back-up. It was a large

property and so for ten years she fostered children there, giving them a 'better life.'

These days his mother is on her own and she is looking to downsize, using the equity in her home, which is valued at just under £400,000, to buy another house.

"I'm hoping that I can help my mother to invest the rest of the money to create financial freedom for her as well. I've seen with my own eyes what property can give you in the form of stability."

Ian is reluctant to quit his plumbing business while earning well from it but recognises there may come a time when his full-time occupation is in property.

He sometimes works late into the night on his main job, preparing quotes, dispatching invoices and speaking to customers, whereas he spends only about an hour a day managing his rental accommodation through his company, Charbell Properties.

"Property is more passive. I went on holiday for two weeks with the family. While I was there £3,200 was transferred into my account and I received £2,800 in bookings. I have to pinch myself sometimes when I sit down and look at the figures."

Samuel is full of praise for his student. He says: "I'm seeing more and more tradespeople becoming property investors and entrepreneurs because they're out all day fixing up properties and understand the bricks and mortar side of it. It requires training to make that transition.

"Ian has done so well. He is earning more money than most landlords make who own property and he has an excellent long-term business plan. He should be proud of what he has achieved."

IAN'S TIPS

“If you’re thinking about getting into property, get some mentors.”

“You’ve got to put in the work. If you’re not willing to have that work ethic, you’re going to fail.”

“Network is everything. If you don’t know something, you can go on the academy group chat and type in any question you want about property. Somebody will know the answer.”



CHAPTER 5 – KHUSH PARDESI

Entrepreneur spends two hours a week managing a rental portfolio making him £4,000 to £5,000 a month

Khush Pardesi is reaping the benefits of being in property not just financially but also in how much time he has for himself. Khush only spends around two hours a week managing his rental portfolio.

Initially he had to juggle a demanding job with setting up his business after joining the academy. It also took him about six months to land his first deal. In the end, however, his hard work and persistence were rewarded with an enviable lifestyle.

Khush has four rent-to-serviced accommodation properties which generate a profit of £4,000 to £5,000 a month, depending on the time of year.

His background in project management and automotive design could not be further removed from how he makes a living nowadays. He worked in that sector for ten years, going into it after leaving university, but had other ambitions even then.

Samuel Leeds

“I always wanted to create my own business and be my own boss. I looked at businesses for sale and what I could start up. I also had an interest in property but didn’t know how to get into it.”

A window into the world of real estate investing was opened when he saw one of Samuel Leeds’ YouTube videos about buying a property with a limited company. He watched more of Samuel’s free content and then went to his crash course in Birmingham.

“A week later I joined the academy. I thought I’m up for this. I want to do this.”

Enduring months of failed attempts to secure a deal was challenging, he admits.

“It was quite tough because the thing people need to be ready for, if they do this, is that you might not get results straight away. It’s like delayed gratification.”

When the trainee investor finally did taste success, he clinched two rent-to-serviced accommodation agreements within a fortnight. One was in his hometown of Stafford and the second one in Milton Keynes where he was living at the time.

The academy gave him invaluable support in helping him to achieve his all-important breakthrough. After finishing the live training, mentors gave him advice in telephone calls. He also took part in weekly Mastermind Zoom sessions when students share their triumphs and give each other tips.

“I was seeing people getting deals and making money. I thought I need to do something different.”

Kush gave himself a week to get as many viewings as possible and then found his two SAs, setting them up in two weeks.

At that point, he was still working full time while trying to run a business. “You have to make the sacrifice and say every spare minute of my weekend and evening is going towards this business. Your family don’t see you. Friends don’t see you. But now it’s all worth it.

“As soon as the first SA went live, and the bookings started coming in, I was thinking let’s see how this goes on and it just took off. The first property makes a profit of about £1,000 a month.”

Although Kush was confident from the start that he could be successful in property, he confesses he was not pushing himself enough.

“I wasn’t putting enough pressure on myself to get as many viewings as I should have been doing. I was doing viewings, but they weren’t consistent every week.”

The same was true when it came to contacting landlords. “It was like I’ll make a few calls, message a few landlords on OpenRent, I won’t get anywhere. Then the next week I might not do anything.”

Other students, who enrolled on the academy at the same time as him, were doing better than he was and that ultimately motivated him to keep trying.

“It shows you that it is possible. If other people can do it, you can do it. After the first two I thought I can use them as leverage when I’m talking to other landlords. So, it’s much easier now.”

All of Kush’s deals came through approaching landlords advertising their properties on sites like OpenRent.

He normally messages the landlord first and then tries to ‘get them on the phone’ so that he can go through his business model. He makes it clear that it would be his company renting the place and that he is seeking a minimum three-year let during which time the accommodation will be offered for short stays.

“I’ve learnt that it needs to be a win-win for them as well. Some people want to be actively involved in their property and have a relationship with the tenant. Other people just want to be hands-off, with no stress. One of my landlords isn’t even in the UK.”

He also stresses that the property would be maintained to a high standard as if it were a ‘show home,’ making the point that it is in his interest to do that to encourage repeat bookings.

His customer base includes contractors, business travellers and families who are moving to another area and need a temporary base. All his rent-to-rents are therefore three-bedroom houses to accommodate larger groups.

There are other advantages to only having houses. As they are normally freehold, there is no head lease which might limit his ability to rent out the accommodation.

Kush, who left his job in October 2023, knows how to speak to landlords and answer their queries, thanks to his training. However, he found it daunting at first. “You feel like you’re not getting anywhere but you have to get through that at the start.”

Rather than taking a rejection personally, the businessman has learnt to move on if the deal he is trying to negotiate does not suit the landlord.

His income from property now exceeds what he was earning in his old job for far less effort, Kush says.

He uses a channel manager, a piece of software, which enables him to create a listing which then appears on Airbnb, booking.com and Google for people to view and reserve his accommodation. A direct booking link is also available.

“I’ll ring every guest before they check in. I’ll understand why they’re staying with me and the reason for visiting the area. Then I’ll get a direct contact for them. That way I can book them in direct next time and save on commission.”

The system automatically stops double bookings being made and greatly reduces his workload. The entrepreneur says it might sound ‘silly,’ but he spends just two hours a week, if that, on managing the houses under his control once they are up and running.

The Serviced Accommodation Intensive course on the academy gave him not just knowledge but valuable connections too. He found his cleaners in Milton Keynes through an academy member. They then recommended other cleaners who could look after his accommodation in the north.

“That’s why the Whatsapp group we have is great. You put a question in there and you get so many people who message you back.”

Other investors on the academy gave him advice on how to attract longer bookings and tweak his online advertisement every day to make it stand out in searches.

It took about three weeks for the first booking to come through from collecting the keys to the Stafford house to getting it set up and advertised.

“It was longer than I wanted it to be, but I was working full time. So, it was [spending] weekends and evenings painting and getting all the furniture. You also have a list of things you have to do to get it right. It takes a long time for that list to be marked off. But once it was done, the bookings kept coming in.”

The fourth SA which Kush took on is a detached house with a large garden in Stoke-on-Trent. The rent to the landlord is £1,200 a month. He then rents it to contractors, charging £130 to £160 a night.

He asks his guests where they are working and for how long, and if they can give him a recommendation or know anyone else who might want to stay there.

His family has backed him in his enterprise. Kush says: “They’ve been in business all their lives. So, they understand the motivation. They helped with the staging as well. Everyone’s been getting involved. They’re very happy now they can see the results that 12 months of hard work paid off.”

His fiancée also assisted him with the staging of his rentals, choosing the colours and materials – something he enjoys as well with his design skills.

It cost Kush £12,000 to sign up to the academy. It wasn’t a difficult decision, he says. “I knew I needed the education and the network of people who are doing it.”

Membership gave him access to the Whatsapp chat group, where he could ask questions, and the mentoring calls which he could book whenever he needed them.

“A lot of the time I’d book a mentor call and get an answer for a question I didn’t even ask. I’d ring up about a deal and be thinking it doesn’t work as an HMO. Let’s go through the numbers. Then one of the mentors would say have you thought about an SA? We’ll brainstorm it.

“Samuel says it’s like having expert eyes over your business and I agree.”

He spent two days at Samuel’s house which gave him more insights into the industry, such as how to save on VAT.

“It was brilliant. I was listening to everyone else’s stories. I learned a lot and his feedback to them helped me as well.”

His plan moving forward is to complete at least one buy, refurbish, refinance project which he discussed with his coaches at the Accelerated

Coaching Performance Programme. He is actively looking for suitable properties and has viewings lined up around Staffordshire.

He is also still on the lookout for serviced accommodation opportunities. “If I see good SA deals, I’m going to take them on because I know the recipe now and how it works. I know each one will bring in about £1,000 a month.”

The deposits and furnishings for his first two properties cost him £10,000. The outlay was worth it in his opinion because it gave him a passive income.

“The big plus for serviced accommodation is you can put the rules and procedures in place and make it a passive income. It’s not completely passive because at the end of the day it’s still a business. You have to make sure your customers are happy; your adverts are optimised, and you check what your competition’s doing.”

He also believes the barrier to entry with a rent-to-SA is relatively low with regards to how much money is required for the deposit and furnishings.

Property has also given Kush the freedom to choose where he lives as he no longer needs to be in Milton Keynes for his work. “I’m probably going to move back to Stafford and be close to the family because I’m free.”

Samuel is full of praise for his former student who still maintains his link with the academy. “Kush has done extremely well. I’m proud of him. He’s also been a massive asset to the academy. For the first six months of his training, he was listening and taking notes on the Mastermind calls. Now he’s the one who’s giving everybody suggestions. That’s great to see as well.

“When people say to me that they haven’t got a deal after three or four months, I say keep persisting and showing up. There’s a reason that it’s a 12-month programme and not a 12-week programme.

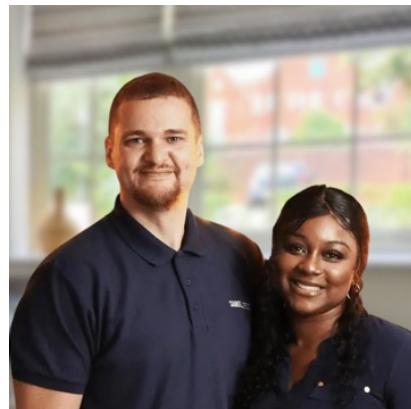
“Sure, there are some people who secure deals quickly. But for other people it takes time. That’s OK because if it was easy everybody would do

it. The people who succeed are the people who persist. When you set up a business, the first six months or so can be a hard slog and you're not getting any return. But when the return does come it's huge."

KHUSH'S TIPS

"Believe in yourself. Become the person you admire, and you can make a change."

"Take action. Find people who are successful and just go for it."



CHAPTER 6 – LACARLA DALEY

IT worker who quit her job to go into property doubles her income

Living in London with a steady job in IT and working from home most of the time, Lacarla Daley seemingly had it all. Hers was a comfortable life and yet she felt bored and undervalued at work. Plenty of people in her shoes might have stayed where they were, rather than rock the boat. Instead, Lacarla took the bold decision to leave her employment and train full time to become a property entrepreneur.

It was a risky strategy, but it quickly paid off. In just a year she built a successful business, turning over around £30,000 a month, and had more than doubled her old salary – without owning a single brick or using any of her own money.

Her income is derived from providing serviced accommodation and sourcing property deals for investors.

Lacarla, who became an Airbnb Superhost in four months, has a portfolio of 26 properties in Manchester and Bradford which she rents out mainly as furnished accommodation. They generate a profit of about £7,000 a month, depending on the time of year.

She manages some of them for the owners, taking a percentage of the earnings as her fee. Others are rent-to-rents where she pays the landlord an agreed monthly amount. She is then allowed to rent out the accommodation at a higher rate, keeping the profit.

Her introduction to the world of real estate investing was the £1 crash course which she describes as 'amazing.' It was held in Manchester and afterwards she enrolled on the online Deal Selling Masterclass. Full of invaluable information, it lasted about 70 hours, and she watched it repeatedly. By the end, she was fired up and 'ready to go,' recalls Lacarla.

"I felt like everything Samuel was training online I could do."

At the same time, it made her restless to leave her job. "I was thinking, you can do this. Why stay here and be unhappy. Why don't you try."

Her mind was made up when she wanted to attend the in-person deal selling course but was unable to get the time off work. Her way round the problem was to hand in her notice.

Hungry for success, with only two months' notice to serve before she left, Lacarla viewed a house in Somerset the weekend before going on the course. On her return, she ran the investment opportunity by one of the trainers who told her it was a 'great deal.'

Buoyed by this approval, she got the chance to pitch it to Samuel Leeds himself at the masterclass. Vying for his attention alongside other students promoting their deals, she went unnoticed at first. So, she shouted: 'I've got an all money out deal.' Her pluck was rewarded when Samuel then chose her deal to sell to an investor. It earned her a commission of £4,000 which she put towards becoming a member of the academy.

"It was scary at first because investing in the academy is expensive and I didn't have a job. But I was ready to put everything into it."

The deal, which Lacarla had found, was for a five-bedroom house which could be converted into a seven-bed house share.

“I was reeling off all the numbers when Samuel was asking me about it. He said what’s the vision and I was able to show him. It was just great.”

After selling her first deal in February 2023, Lacarla made rapid progress. One of her first decisions was to move from London to Huddersfield in Yorkshire.

“I found that the market in London was very competitive, plus I had family in Huddersfield. I knew it well and you can get to different places, like Leeds, Manchester and Bradford. There was so much opportunity there.”

Whilst still training, she sold six property deals to give herself an income while establishing her serviced accommodation business. She also raised £5,000 to fund her initial rent-to-rent venture, borrowing the cash from an acquaintance of a friend who saw how passionate she was about property. “She really believed in me. She said, ‘I know someone who may be able to invest in you.’ I spoke to them and laid everything out, and within 24 hours the money was in my bank.”

After being handed the keys to her first serviced accommodation property in April 2023, she found herself in control of multiple properties within months, including several in one building.

Failure was never an option in her mind but there was a moment where she nearly gave up.

“There was one day when everything was overwhelming because I’m a one-man band and I was managing everything. I just remember waking up and saying, I want to quit. Then I thought about applying for a job and I snapped out of it straight away. I thought this has to work.”

It was the academy which gave her the essential support she needed while finding her feet.

“At the start everything happened so quickly. I had this block of 20 and I was just drowning, trying to figure it out. I was so stressed because I wasn’t utilising the tools I had.”

One of the coaches advised her about managing her rentals. Lacarla also went networking and other academy members gave her advice. After systemising her serviced accommodation, she was soon back on track.

“The academy was fantastic, especially when I started to use it more.” A mentor also helped her to structure her operation.

The two-day Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme at Samuel Leeds’ house pushed her on even more. Lacarla learnt about customer service and how to hire staff and was put in the hot seat when Samuel grilled her about her business.

Her portfolio is made up of 22 units in Bradford and four in Manchester, with a mixture of guests staying in her accommodation. Two of her units in Bradford are reserved for supported living which enables disabled people to live independently in the community.

The entrepreneur acquired expertise in this sector by working with users of the service.

“Quite a lot of people around me are in supported living. Sometimes I do one or two shifts a week where I work in that environment with my friends and they’re training me.”

It provides her with a guaranteed income. As a result, she is planning to turn the other 20 units into supported living accommodation.

“I have also had midterm tenants in the block of 20 in Bradford. It’s right next to the football stadium. So, it’s in a great location. I have a high repeat guest rate. Currently we have about four in the serviced accommodation

section who have been there for three months. They keep extending every month.”

In another section, she has had people staying for six months to a year.

“In Bradford I have a lot of healthcare professionals who stay. They’re travelling from far. I get a lot of Monday to Friday bookings. They work in a hospital and get a shift for a week.”

The businesswoman manages these places for an investor, charging about £70 a night, plus cleaning. The arrangement suits both parties. After she set them up as serviced accommodation they increased in value and the landlord refinanced them.

In Manchester, the charge is around £120 a night. Her customers in the week are contractors.

“The car park is full of work vans from 6pm because it’s just contractors. Then at the weekend I get tourists and weekenders coming to do some shopping or go to events.”

People moving to the area also book her accommodation. Typically, they are doing up a house and need somewhere to stay for a few weeks. That can turn into months if the work is delayed. The nightly rate takes into account the fact that she is offering them flexibility, as well as a home from home and convenience. If they rented a property, they would have to sign a tenancy agreement for a year, furnish it themselves and install their own Wi-Fi.

Lacarla is continually on the lookout for new deals. When she was in Manchester, she noticed an apartment block which was being renovated. After finding out from the builders who the owner was, she enquired whether his intention was to rent or sell the flats. It allowed her to build a rapport. She then told him about her management service.

“For me it’s easier because I have the proof of the portfolio and I’m able to show what I do.”

She rents properties through her company, the Daley Property Group, and ensures they are run professionally. Customers are asked to pay a deposit and produce their ID. Security equipment is also in place to protect each one.

“It’s not as easy as just sticking it on Airbnb. There’s a lot to it,” Lacarla points out.

Her management fee ranges from 15 to 30 per cent of the revenue. “Thirty per cent is mainly for supported living because it’s guaranteed income and I’ve been working with the same investor for a while.”

She is also setting up another two furnished rental properties. One was intended as a buy-to-let until she suggested to the landlord that it be used as an SA.

“When I showed him the figures, minus my percentage, they were still making over £2,000 a month.”

One of her guests even gave her some business. “It was my first time charging a deposit and the lock box wasn’t working. I thought the check-in process wasn’t perfect, but she just loved the way I dealt with the situation.

“She called me as soon as she checked in and asked me if I managed the building. When I replied I’d got a few properties there, she said my husband and I would love you to manage some of ours.”

The decision to manage a property or take it on as a rent-to-rent hinges on what the owner wants to do with it, she says.

“Some landlords are happy to take a bit of a risk, and some are not.”

The advantage to her of a management arrangement is that she does not have to put in any of her money, although in her case she has not used any of her funds.

“Every single one of my deals are no-money-down deals. I’ve literally invested zero pounds of my own money in all my deals.”

Lacarla gave up a £36,000 a year salary to go into property but is happy she made the right decision to change her career after seeing her wealth steadily increase.

Within a year she had ticked off two of her goals which she had to write down on the Financial Freedom Intensive course. One was to appear on Winners on a Wednesday.

“I also wanted to get two serviced accommodations by the end of April because I received my last pay cheque at the end of March, and I did. It was crazy.”

Having a goal is important, she believes. “You have to have a goal. I remember when I finished college, I wanted to get my first car. If I hadn’t had that goal, I wouldn’t have got it in nine months. If you don’t know what you’re working towards, you’re just working. You need to have something that’s driving you.”

Her next target is to be turning over £50,000 a month and she will also be trying to sell more deals, as well as acquiring her own assets. For her the ultimate dream is to have a business which runs itself.

“I’ve always wanted to live a life where I have a business running for me and making money, and I’m able to travel the world and just live life on my terms.”

Samuel says Lacarla is reaping the rewards of her dedication: “One of the things we all know Lacarla for in the property community is her work ethic.

Samuel Leeds

When you work hard, surround yourself with a good team, invest in yourself and are courageous, you're almost guaranteed to win."

LACARLA'S TIPS

"You have to be passionate and willing to do whatever it takes and then just be around winners."

"Get the training. Without it I wouldn't be here."



CHAPTER 7 – NATHAN LAMB

Ex-lorry driver clocks up £18,000 in one week from selling deals

Before going into property Nathan Lamb was a lorry driver. Then he bought a house, did it up and sold it. That gave him funds to join the academy and now Nathan works full time in the industry.

Most of his earnings come from sourcing deals for investors. In just one week, the entrepreneur clocked up £18,000 from commissions. He also has three rent-to-rent properties with joint venture partners and still does house renovations from time to time.

It could not be more different to how he used to make a living only a few years ago. Nathan had his own limited company, carrying out contractor work as a lorry driver for large firms. He was well paid, earning £800 to £1,200 a week. The hours, however, were very long, and he was unhappy in his work.

Property had interested him for a long time. “I’ve always liked property, even when I was younger. I used to watch Homes Under the Hammer with my mum. I always liked the idea of doing up properties,” the ex-trucker recalls.

With that in mind, he took the plunge and purchased the property that would lead him down the road of being a ‘wheeler and dealer’ in the housing market. He spent his last £10,000 on the deposit and worked ‘like a dog’ to finance the refurbishment project while living there.

It took him two years to finish the work, but the effort was more than worth it as he made a profit of £40,000 on the sale of the house.

Nathan had already come across Samuel Leeds at that point and decided to get some training.

“I came to a £1 crash course when I was in the middle of doing my refurb. I didn’t sign up for any advanced training then because I needed every penny for the refurb of the house. But I carried on watching Samuel’s YouTube videos and I signed up to the 365 (online training). It was a minimal amount.”

Afterwards the father-of-three attended a Discovery Day to help him formulate a bespoke action plan and pick Samuel’s brains. Two days later he signed up to the academy. Having completed the year-long programme, Nathan became an associate academy member to continue receiving unlimited mentoring and access to exclusive events.

He also gives advice to new students. “When you’re starting off the key is to network with everybody and get as many contacts as you can. Reputation is a big thing as well and being known as a nice guy. I spend probably six hours a week on the phone to new academy members asking for advice on how to do things. So, I’ll break it down for them and say just make sure you’re showing up to everything, like the Monday night Mastermind and the academy meals. It was only once I started showing up and coming to the dinners and going to the Masterminds that it really started to take off. I also post myself a lot more on social media.”

Nathan adds: “There were times where I spent my last £100 coming down to the meal. I put it into fuel and just came down to network.”

The Mastermind Zoom sessions are an essential part of the training, allowing students to get feedback and learn from the experiences of others. It is also a chance to share successes.

Nathan learnt about all the various strategies used by investors to make money and uses his knowledge to find all types of deals, according to what his customers are looking for investment-wise. This might be a rent-to-rent, buy-to-let or a buy, refurbish, refinance opportunity.

“In Derby with BRRs, I know the market very well. I’ve got a lot of contacts with agents in that area.”

One of the main advantages of investing in the city, the businessman explains, is that there is no Article 4 restriction in force, apart from in a few streets.

“That’s a good thing because you can buy a property, renovate it and turn it into a HMO, and you won’t need a licence for it. When Article 4 does come in, it will increase the value of the house [as everyone else will need planning permission.]”

His job is to research the market, negotiate the purchase price and obtain quotes from builders and traders for improving the property. He will also work out the likely end value and present the figures to the investor.

“You get contacts to my builders if you’re buying something in Derby. I’ll offer project management as well. So, they’ll be able to have a completely hands-off experience and know that it’s looked after by me.”

He prides himself on his after-care service. “I’ll say, I’m not just going to sell you a deal. For a lot of people, a rent-to-rent for example is going to be their first deal. They want to know what channel manager to use or how to systemise things better. So, I’ll go over that with them.”

This customer service-based approach was tested when he sold a rental deal and then it collapsed due to circumstances beyond his control. It left

his investor out of pocket as she had already forked out £2,300 on maintaining the property and getting it ready for guests.

Upset at seeing his client miss out, Nathan contacted his guru Samuel for advice and then found her another deal. Nathan also gave her a discount which equalled her outlay.

“I’m losing money but it’s because I care about my customers, and I want them to do well,” he stresses.

His record-breaking week, when he banked £18,000 in fees from selling deals, came after he took part in the two-day Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme. Nathan remembers how Samuel interrogated him about his business.

“I was grilled the most. He said I was giving too much away and being too much of a nice guy.”

At the time Nathan passed any real estate investment opportunities he found to a co-deal sourcer who sold them to his pool of customers and then shared the commission with him. This was despite Nathan having built up his own list of investors to whom he could offer his property deals. He was also criticised for handing over too high a percentage of his profits to joint venture partners.

It gave Nathan the impetus to raise his game and concentrate on raking in more money from identifying lucrative propositions. “On average the profit per month is £8,000 to £12,000, but one week I didn’t stop. I put all my time and energy into just deal selling to see how much I could get done and made £18,000. It’s life changing.”

The entrepreneur is also now managing a lot of properties for his clients. Usually, he will offer a management service with a rent-to-rent deal when the investor does not wish to be involved.

Nathan says his reputation has grown to the point where an investor will spot one of his deals and want to pay for it immediately. Even so, he prefers to call the client first to go through the figures.

There is a 14-day cooling off period included in his terms and conditions which the investor must sign before being given information about the proposal on offer. He also requires his finder's fee of £3,000 to be paid in advance. Investors are refunded if, after seeing the property and doing their own due diligence, they change their mind.

His training on the academy taught him how to handle any objections that the prospective buyer might have which would prevent him closing the deal. If, for example, the person asks for a few days to think about a deal, Nathan will ask what is stopping them from deciding to go ahead.

Nathan needs to move fast if he puts in an offer on a property and it is accepted. The agent will be pressing for photo ID details, proof of funds and a correspondence address. So, he quickly has to find an investor to buy the house/apartment or his reputation as a reliable operator will be damaged.

He checks whether the investor has the cash to proceed with the purchase and has any property experience.

“I always qualify an investor because if it's a rent-to-rent deal, maybe only £10,000 needs to be spent but they might need a reference. Sometimes they need an £85,000 plus salary to qualify.”

Nathan's latest venture is to refurbish a house which he is buying with a bridging loan. It was originally up for sale at £130,000 and was then reduced to £110,000 after a buyer withdrew. He negotiated to purchase it for £85,000 and budgeted £15,000 for the renovation.

“I'm hoping to complete on that one very soon. I've got an investor who's giving me £30,000 for the extras.”

He found it through an agent, who sold him a property previously, and it promises to give him an excellent return on investment, with a predicted end value of around £150,000.

His company, Bet Estates, is named after his children, Brooklyn, Elsie and Teddy and he is keen to provide them with a legacy, as well as making the most of his life in the present moment.

Being in property full time allows him to spend more time at home with his partner and children.

“That’s important to me. My grandad passed away at 51 on New Year’s Eve on my bathroom floor. My dad passed away a couple of years ago. He was only 45. So, I’ve always had that subconscious thing in my head that maybe I’m going to die young.

“I want to leave something behind for the kids. I’m from a council estate. My mum did her best when I was growing up. She always gave us everything she could, but it was rough. It’s not a nice place. I don’t want that for my kids. I want them to not have the struggles that I had but also not be spoilt.”

His success is already giving his family tangible benefits. Nathan bought his partner a Range Rover and ordered her a triple wardrobe, while his children were treated to a day out to remember in London when he was staging a property there.

It was during the school holidays and the whole family tagged along. They stayed in comfortable accommodation and in the evening went for a pizza.

“I said order whatever you want. For the first time I realised I’m not worrying about what I’ve got in my bank. It’s nice to just relax.”

Samuel sings his praises: “Nathan is a good salesperson, thanks to his training, and it’s a good thing that he is so customer focused. Having the skills to be able to sell is a super power. It comes with responsibility and

Samuel Leeds

that responsibility is looking after your customers. He's a proper nice guy who deserves his success and I appreciate the help he gives to new academy members."

NATHAN'S TIPS

"Get started by coming to the crash course."

"It's not that hard to sell deals if you put the time and the effort in. Just make sure you come to all the events on the training."

"Be customer service based and really care for your customers."

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 8 – RIK TAYLOR

Labourer goes from earning £400 a week to making up to £10,000 a month from deal selling alone

In the space of just two years Rik Taylor, went from earning £400 a week as a labourer to making £7,000 to £10,000 a month from selling property deals. He also has a rent-to-serviced accommodation portfolio and has his sights set on buying his own properties.

Rik is a young man who is going places. As he vividly describes his situation: “You can either be a feather in the wind and land wherever life takes you, or you can be an arrow with a destination. I’m a rocket going on to the moon.”

His journey to becoming a full-time property entrepreneur began when he came along to one of Samuel Leeds’ crash courses in Leeds. It gave him an overview of the strategies used by investors to make money in the housing market. Afterwards Rik, then aged 20, was raring to go and wanted to learn more by signing up for advanced training there and then.

The problem was he only had about a week’s wages in his pocket which was not enough to cover the cost of the course. So, he rang his mother and

asked her to lend him £1,500. To his disappointment she refused, telling him he was too caught up in his emotions and he should get back to work.

Rik responded by deciding to get some qualifications to improve his salary. After eight months of NVQ assessments, he qualified as a commercial fire protection installer tasked with keeping buildings safe.

“At this point, I’m like yes, I’m on a good path now and I’m earning good money – anywhere between £800 and £900 a week.”

Then he employed someone to help him, and his earnings went up again.

“I was pulling in about £1,200 a week at the end of my professional career. I worked awfully hard to get there. I really had to push. This was all through Covid as well. It was hard.”

Rik thought he could make a business out of his occupation, but the health and safety requirements were onerous.

“Everything gets inspected. It can be quite tedious to say the least. So, I thought I’m just going to give this property thing a spin.”

After attending the crash course Rik says he knew that was a profitable avenue to go down. He also had the safety net of being able to return to his normal day job if he had to.

“I was a contractor. So, I always knew I could go back to work, if I wanted to step away at any point.”

Even so, Rik admits he was scared after borrowing £2,000 to educate himself in business and property investing.

“It is frightening at the start. There are also the running costs. I had to pay for all the B&Bs and most of the travel, and I had to take care of the lad that was working for me.”

Despite these challenges, success came rapidly after he completed an intensive course on serviced accommodation and HMOs.

“The advanced training was so good. Precisely four weeks and four days after I attended that course, from nothing I had a pair of keys in my hand which was absolutely amazing.”

After clinching his first deal, his mum agreed to pay for him to enrol on the academy.

Rik’s first set of keys was to a property which he rents from the landlord and then lets out at a profit. Since then, he and his business partner have taken on two more properties under a similar rent-to-rent agreement.

With no experience at the outset, his tactic was to get in touch with landlords advertising their properties on websites such as Gumtree and OpenRent, rather than going through an agent. He also made his Facebook friends aware that he was launching a real estate business.

One method, which Rik still employs, is to use his contacts in the construction industry to give him credibility. He will call companies that he knows and ask where their next jobs are. That then becomes the place where he looks for accommodation.

Once he has found a suitable property, he pays the landlord a fixed, monthly rent and the firm rents it from him at a higher rate to house their staff while they are working in the area. He targets tarmac groups especially as their contracts can last several years.

Nowadays the young entrepreneur also deals with letting agents. When enquiring about a property on their books he will ask whether it is furnished and immediately available. If the answer is yes, he will tell the agent he has connections with many construction companies, and that one of them has a big job in the area.

He then establishes whether the owner would be open to letting their property to a company. When asked who would be living there, his reply is that it would be mainly the workers employed on the contract and the site managers who travel around from job to job.

Rik points out that he has the paperwork to back his claims and explains that the accommodation would be put on Airbnb. Assuming he is happy to take on the property after viewing it, and the landlord is willing to agree to a rent-to-rent arrangement, he will tie his client into a six-month contract.

“In business you need to find a source of money and see where it’s going. If you then present yourself as someone who’s driven, passionate and knowledgeable, even if you’re selling toothpicks or combs, you’re always going to win.

“Confidence is a massive part of it too. The biggest thing when speaking to letting agencies is they’re just the vehicle to the landlord. When I pitch letting agencies all I want them to do is put my email forward to the landlord, explaining who will be staying in the property, what company it is and where the big jobs are. If you can put some meat on the bone, that helps in terms of emphasising you are a professional and not just someone, as Samuel says, who has watched a few YouTube videos and is having a putt.”

Not all letting agencies accept company lets. So, Rik and his business partner record the rejections on a database, as well as the details of agents who will consider such an arrangement.

“I’m a big chess player and a massive part of chess is looking at the game you’ve played, reviewing where you went wrong and what the next best move is. If you’ve just been ringing round like an idiot, you can lose track very fast.”

Rik is also constantly looking out for investment opportunities which he can sell through his company, Phoenix Sourcing. He has a list of investors who buy his deals. The job involves negotiating the price and working out the

return on investment. The figures are then presented in a package to the customer.

He goes to networking events to find new investors, passing his deals around. On top of that, he promotes his services on social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and Facebook.

Presentation is all-important in networking, as well as demonstrating your knowledge, Rik believes.

“I’m thinking about my body posture, the clothes I wear, what I’m talking about and who the best people are to speak to. At the start it’s like pushing a merry-go-round. It’s stiff and you feel you’re going nowhere. You push and push, and you ain’t moving. But then it starts turning. It’s got to the point now where it’s just going crazy.”

The academy helped him enormously when creating his network, Rik says.

“Once you build connections with one or two bigger people on the academy, you’ll find everyone’s flocking to you. That established a good base of connections for us, combined with in-person networking events.

“The network and the knowledge you gain is really where the academy shines.”

Coming from Broughton, a small town in North Lincolnshire, being immersed in that environment opened a much wider world to him. During his training Rik learnt about sales, marketing, finance and how to structure his operation.

“That’s how you physically begin to build a business on those four pillars. It’s no good if loads of people know about you but you can’t get a penny off anyone, or you earn a load of money and you aren’t paying your tax efficiently.”

Weekly Mastermind Zoom calls, when students share their triumphs and challenges and receive instant feedback, also accelerated his progress.

There were occasions when he had to show persistence and determination. This was certainly true after taking on his first property.

“I’d run out of money – the accountability of the academy made me push through this – but I remember vividly setting up this serviced accommodation in Sheffield. At the time I didn’t have a car. It’s 40 minutes away. I’m getting lifts to it. It was chaos.”

To make matters worse he had Covid, but still managed to get his business up and running.

“I had to be up at five o’clock to get on site for seven o’clock to work eight to nine hours and then had a drive of two hours home. I had no time. I was working on my laptop at four and five in the morning setting up whatever I could.

“I believe if you’re going to go from poor to rich and be a new person, the old you has to die. You have to cut a bit of you off. That’s going to be painful. That was the point where I could have said you know what, I can’t do this.”

Instead, Rik kept going and is now reaping the benefits of his hard work. He made sure he followed the systems and processes which his guru Samuel teaches.

“I’d be arrogant and stupid not to follow what’s worked for a multi-millionaire.”

Rik takes deposits from investors and has a clear set of terms and conditions, which they must sign, to steer clear of timewasters.

“It’s a business. I’ve got staff to pay for and marketing fees. I need to know the investor is serious. If not, I’m going to move on.”

He also checks that the person is a good fit for the deal. “That’s critical because even if you find a guy who’s super rich and will send you £5,000 instead of £3,000, when it comes to a month online and they’re not running the property correctly everything falls apart.

“That’s going to burn my relationship with the letting agency or the landlord who I’ve been dealing with, especially at the start of that working relationship. It’s in my best interest to ensure that the person taking on that deal understands what they’re about to get themselves into.”

He adds: “People use deal sourcers as a guide to taking on an investment. That’s what I get paid for.”

Separate to that activity, his one-year goal is to earn £50,000 a month from buying properties which he can refurbish and rent out either as an SA or an HMO to generate more revenue.

The plan is to secure a lease option agreement which would allow him to purchase a property at a later stage, using the rental income in the interim to fund the deposit. Another possibility is to refinance the mortgage and release cash for further investments.

Either way, the businessman intends to make the most of his promising start and move on to the next level by acquiring assets. “It’s a buyers’ market right now. There are some stupidly good deals around. As a deal sourcer I’m seeing these opportunities all the time.”

Samuel describes Rik as a deal sourcing machine, adding: “I have no doubt that he will triple his income in the next 12 months. What he has achieved is impressive. I’m really proud of him and I look forward to seeing what the future holds.”

RIK'S TIPS

“I’m a massive believer in mentors. You need to be learning from people who have proved they can do what you want to do.”

“You need persistence and people to pull you up which is why being in an environment like the academy is so important.”

“You need to take action.”



CHAPTER 9 – NARELLE COWAN

Mother-of-one raises £500,000 from investors in a year after starting out with no money

When Narelle Cowan became a member of the Samuel Leeds Academy, she had hit rock bottom. She was unemployed, with no money or experience in property and bad credit. It could not have been a more challenging start.

Happily, Narelle, who once drove lorries for a living, dug herself out of the rut she found herself in and went on to raise just short of £500,000 from investors in a year. It was a mammoth achievement given her circumstances.

She bought a pub and secured a hotel, both of which are to be converted into an HMO and flats. She also has a serviced accommodation portfolio and is now financially free with assets in South Wales worth around £1m.

Narelle was a Class 1 lorry driver who went part time to try to derive an income from real estate.

“I was working three days a week trying to get investors for a little buy-to-let or something. But with no experience that’s hard,” recalls the mother-of-one.

She had no savings whatsoever and was earning just £1,200 a month, of which £950 went on childcare. Then when her daughter went from nursery to school, the hours no longer fitted in with Narelle’s job and so she could no longer continue with it.

While urgently trying to find an alternative way of making money, one of her two brothers kept mentioning Samuel Leeds. Narelle had never heard of him and therefore looked him up to discover he held regular £1 crash courses about property investing.

As a surprise for her brother’s birthday, she paid £2 for them to attend one of the introductory events. By the end of the day, she had signed up to the academy. Her brother never joined.

Narelle says he remains sceptical about her success because she was poor for so long.

“It’s just insane to go from being a lorry driver to where I am now because people knew me for being poor. I had loads of animals and my little girl. Now I’ve got people ringing me from my past saying, ‘What are you doing? Oh, you have to teach me.’

Her advice is always the same: join the academy.

Thanks to her training Narelle became an expert in raising finance. She hooked her first investor through one of her posts on a Facebook group.

“I kept posting different deals saying I need this much, and I’ll give you a fixed per cent return. He said, ‘I’ve ignored so many of those posts but for some reason I just got drawn to the last one you put up.’ Loads of people used to contact me but nothing ever came of it apart from him.

“The deal that he invested in fell through and then I asked him if we could repurpose it into serviced accommodation because I’d met Samuel at that point and that’s what we did. So, I put it into the first couple of SAs and went from there.

“That guy now acts as a guarantor for me on everything because he needed to at the beginning, and we’ve since bought a property together.”

It was during a trip to Uganda to see Samuel’s charitable work, including the provision of a hospital ward, that Narelle met Hannah Boden, another academy graduate.

“She was telling me she’d just done a nine-bed HMO. I said I’d bought a pub that I’m converting into a 15-bed HMO, so we bonded over that. We’re doing a similar thing. She’s just much further ahead than me,” explains Narelle.

The two women discussed investing together in a 10-bed house share. However, the deal was sold to somebody else who offered more for the property. Then Narelle said there was a hotel she wanted to purchase. She had seen an auction sign on it and enquired about it only to be informed it had been sold in 2020. The entrepreneur was puzzled as no redevelopment work appeared to be going on.

Then the hotel came up for sale again. It emerged that the owners had been seeking planning consent, which was later granted, to turn it into eight apartments with a separate commercial unit.

Narelle and Hannah did their sums and concluded the ‘numbers worked.’ They acted swiftly, securing it within two days.

The hotel, which they are buying together for £260,000, will be worth £1.2m just with the permitted development alone. However, they intend to go back to the planners for permission to increase the size of the development, says Narelle.

“They wanted us to demolish a coach house which is outside. That could be more flats. There’s a massive demand for one-bed flats in the area. So, we’re going to contest that by saying we’re providing more housing.”

The work to convert it into flats would cost just over £400,000, according to their calculations, which would still leave them with a decent profit.

The hotel is just down the road from the pub which Narelle is acquiring separately for £130,000 in the town of Maesteg. The project involves no money of her own. An investor is paying the deposit of £32,000, with the redevelopment being financed through a bridging loan.

It will cost about £150,000 to make it into an HMO. After receiving a commercial valuation of £686,000 once the work is finished, the margin is likely to be huge. The end value is based on the annual rent for all the rooms, minus the expenses and multiplied by 100.

The plan is to then refinance the property which will allow Narelle to pull out all the money and repay the bridging company and the investor with the interest on top. It will in effect leave her with a free pub and there will also be a profit in it, she expects.

Narelle’s initial investor funded her academy fee. She pays him a fixed percentage return on the amount.

“I pay 12 per cent. It would have been more for me if I’d done it as a loan because my credit wasn’t great when I started.”

Although she had no experience of property investing before entering the academy, she had dabbled in business before. She also went through a rigorous interview process to get on the year-long training programme with Samuel Leeds Education.

When she was 19, Narelle, who has a degree in animal biology, attended another academy run by businessman Peter Jones, one of the Dragons in the television series *Dragons’ Den*.

“I’ve always been business minded. I felt I did well in that year. We did a hypothetical pitch for investment, and they gave the money to me. So, for me it was either business or animals and I made the conscious choice to go with the animals.”

It was a lifestyle choice, which was never going to be very profitable, she realised. Her solution was to try various enterprises, including selling products on Amazon, which paid for her to travel overseas to work with animals.

When the time came for a career change, Narelle was prepared to dedicate herself to learning how to be a property entrepreneur.

“One thing about being poor and in a rut is that you feel like you can’t get out of that. I had nothing to lose. So, I knew I could give it my all, whereas my brother might have struggled to do that because he had a family to pay for.”

Narelle only had one child to support and for her the ‘only way was up.’ She enlisted her other brother in her business and is passing on her knowledge to him. He views properties, while she deals with the paperwork.

“With bridging there is so much paperwork. The last one I bought with land took forever to get across the line. We had to change the company structure and do loads of stuff.”

After finishing her training Narelle turned her attention to the serviced accommodation strategy to give herself cash flow, obtaining four apartments financed by joint venture partners.

“They’re all now good friends of mine. On average they make £1,000 to £1,500 each. I give my investors 75 per cent until they get their investment back out.”

It means she is only receiving 25 per cent of the revenue for doing the work, but she now has someone to help her with her SA's.

As Narelle progressed in her property journey, so she took on larger projects to attract investors by giving them a 'big chunk' of money back.

With these ventures, the businesswoman is offering her backers at least 25 per cent of the profits.

"Sometimes we're offering 25 per cent or 25 per cent plus five per cent of the cash flow for two years just to keep people on board. I will make money off all of them. But even if I didn't make any money off them on the refinance, I'd still own the asset and have the cash flow."

If the deal turned sour and she was unable to pay back a client, she would have to sell one of the assets. There is risk, but also big rewards.

The investors are all from the academy where members trust one another. So far none of them have come to see the project which they are investing in, Narelle adds.

The businesswoman belongs to a property redress scheme, in case one of her customers has a complaint. Her company is also covered by insurance.

Her profile increased after she became active on Instagram, as advised by her mentors.

"I went to an academy party and people knew my name before I'd even said anything. I thought that's just because I upped my Instagram game a bit."

Once the pub came on the market and she saw how much money could be made from redeveloping it, Narelle began searching for other commercial premises up for sale. One target is to buy a doctor's surgery which she used to visit as a child.

The two-storey building has a long corridor with lots of rooms off it and a car park which makes it the 'perfect HMO.'

"It's in the middle of town, in one of the best parts of town as well. I'm just waiting for that because they're struggling to relocate."

These days she has far more money to spend on her daughter, although she is aware of the danger of spoiling her. Her visit to Uganda emphasised that to her.

"It was overwhelming. We went to seven schools and to the hospital where Samuel was building the ward. It's so humbling. As soon as I got back, my kid said I want more chocolate and I said no."

From her profits, Narelle donated £5,000 towards the cost of the health facility and is eager to remain involved with the academy.

"I was gutted when I'd finished because I was away from the environment. I've asked if I can crew now. [at events]. I want to come back because I get to refresh on the knowledge. I also get to help others with their journey as they start out.

"I wouldn't be anywhere near where I am if it wasn't for the academy."

Samuel is full of admiration for his former student: "One of the reasons Narelle has been so successful is she is courageous. At the Deal Selling Masterclass I remember thinking she's also got passion and energy and a decent business brain. It's incredible what she's achieved so far. She's playing real life Monopoly."

NARELLE'S TIPS

"Come to the £1 crash course."

"You've got to have the confidence in yourself to succeed."

Samuel Leeds

“I always knew I wanted to be in business. I didn’t want to work for someone else and make them rich. You need the right mindset.”



CHAPTER 10 – BEN READ AND RACHEL ROME

Couple exchange punishing jobs in the NHS for a better life as real estate entrepreneurs

Ben Read and his partner Rachel Rome had exhausting jobs in the NHS before they joined the academy and became professional property entrepreneurs.

Ben, who was a financial consultant, was putting in 60 to 70 hours a week, while Rachel was also working similar hours as a nurse. So, they took stock of their lives and decided to change direction.

“We thought, how can we have a better way of life and have life on our terms because we were having hectic, chaotic weeks,” remembers Ben.

The solution was right under their noses. Ben and Rachel came from a family of tradesmen and architects. The pair had also renovated property before and had some knowledge of the buy, refurbish, refinance strategy. So, they concentrated on that.

The couple booked themselves onto a course with Samuel Leeds Education to learn more about the BRR investment technique and then signed up for the year-long academy programme. The more they learnt the more they realised their immediate priority was to generate revenue. So, they secured several rent-to-serviced accommodation properties and began renting them out.

“That gave us the cash flow to enable Ben to leave his job which gave us the time to then focus on deal sourcing, BRRs and project management. Ultimately, it’s about understanding what you’ve got to hand and how best you can make that work for you,” says Rachel.

It was a big step for Ben to take as he was previously earning £45,000 a year with commissions, although now their income far outstrips what their jobs in the health service paid them.

The couple make about £35,000 a month from sourcing property investment deals and renting out furnished accommodation for short stays. How much they earn varies from month to month, depending on the time of year and how many deals they can get over the line.

Rachel and Ben pride themselves on the fact that some of the investors who buy their deals are also their landlords. They control three serviced accommodation properties in Greater Manchester and one in Liverpool. Instead of owning them, they pay the landlord a fixed monthly rent and then rent them out for a higher amount.

“The revenue on average is about £6,000 a month across the four properties. That’s profit,” says Rachel. “Some months it’s been more than that when we’ve got three to four-month direct trade bookings,” Ben adds.

The entrepreneurs take on houses mainly, rather than city centre apartments, aiming to attract contractors, professionals and relocators in need of temporary accommodation.

They passed on some of these rent-to-rent deals to investors. To date Ben and Rachel have sold 20 deals through their business, Synergy Estates, charging a finder's fee of £5,000 for each one.

Both Samuel and Russell Leeds helped them to draw up a business plan. As Ben describes it, it gave them the ingredients for the cake, and they acted on the advice, building a power team in the process which supports their operation.

They went on to create a multi-faceted business after their eyes were opened to the wider world of investments and investors, adopting buy, refurbish, refinance as their principal strategy. Ben and Rachel, however, soon discovered it was impossible to buy every property they viewed which stacked up as a BRR deal. So, they decided they might as well sell it.

In addition to their £5,000 sourcing fee, they charge 10 per cent of the refurbishment cost to manage the project. They then have control over their vision for the property. Their service appeals to investors, especially if they live abroad, because it is hands-off.

They love properties which are 'unloved and vacant,' Ben enthuses because it is an opportunity to snap up a bargain.

One such property was a mid-terrace house three miles from the centre of Manchester which had stood empty for at least three years. The estate agents had valued it at around £115,000, but Ben and Rachel said they could pay no more than £95,000.

Their offer was accepted, and they sold the deal to an investor. As the house is uninhabitable, it is exempt from stamp duty. It will need a full 'back to brick' refurbishment, which will cost £45,000 and include ensuring it is watertight. However, the end value once the work is finished is projected to be £185,000, leaving a 'conservative' profit of £45,000.

Rather than selling it afterwards, which would incur tax, the investor intends to refinance the property by taking out an HMO mortgage. The

client is the owner of their property in Liverpool which they took on as a rent-to-rent for five years.

“This is why it was so complimentary to us because this was our first landlord we converted to an investor,” says Ben.

BRR is just one of the many creative tools which entrepreneurs and investors employ to make money in the housing market.

The usual way of buying a house is to pay a deposit of 25 per cent of the purchase price and to obtain a mortgage for the rest. The BRR strategy works on the principle of acquiring a rundown property and improving it. The house then becomes worth more and a mortgage can be taken out which reflects the new value.

The house purchase that Ben and Rachel negotiated will allow their investor to receive 75 per cent of £185,000 from the lender and get most of his cash back. He can then reinvest that amount into purchasing more properties, using the same method each time.

Thanks to their training, the couple had the knowledge and skills to close the deal. They also made their customer aware of the availability of two-tier lending. Consequently, he secured a bridging loan, plus all his development funds.

The partners have relationships with bridging companies and brokers which enable them to offer a comprehensive service to investors. Many return to them to buy another BRR and keep on reinvesting their money to build their portfolio.

“We have not had to do a great deal of outreach beyond the initial months where you’re doing all your networking,” says Rachel.

“We do still network but 90 per cent of our investors now come through pure organic referrals – people who have been happy with our services in the past, family, friends, professionals and business partners.

“We’ve got nationwide and overseas investors. If you do a good job once, that’s not going to just end with your investor. They’re likely to tell their family and friends and that’s also how we’ve gained investors.”

And they derive business not just from the people who buy properties through them, but also from the sellers. Once a sale is completed, the entrepreneurs will ask them if they want to put their money into purchasing an investment house.

“There’s even a third angle to that. You can educate them and say you have equity [if they are a portfolio landlord] and you can turn it into liquid funds,” Ben points out.

Someone with a £200,000 house and a £50,000 mortgage, for example, can take out a new mortgage, leaving in 25 per cent, and pull out £100,000. Their mortgage will have doubled but they can use that sum of money strategically to acquire wealth through property.

So far, Ben and Rachel have helped landlords owning anything from one to 140 properties to draw down around £1.82m.

“That’s just between five people. Of those five people, three of them have turned into investors because we’ve helped them unlock that and said, what do we do with this now?” Ben says.

He and Rachel offer a free 30-minute telephone consultation to would-be investors to establish how experienced they are and what their budget is likely to be.

Through their property education, they developed a traffic light system to categorise their clients according to how often they plan to do business with them.

Ben explains: “The green ones are the active investors. These are people with a couple of million who are happy to transact on a monthly basis. The

orange ones might transact once every three months. The red investors are people with life funds which they want to invest.

“With someone who say has £50,000, we say a BRR is not suitable maybe for you right now but how about you consider other cash flowing strategies.”

Until they were on the academy, Ben and Rachel were unaware themselves of strategies like rent-to-rent and lease option agreements. Now they might suggest a rent-to-rent deal to a ‘red’ investor as the entry level financially is low.

When negotiating a rent-to-rent agreement they insist on a five-year contract and a 30-day notice period to protect their client, as well as a grace period before rental payments to the landlord begin.

“This gives them time so they’re not starting off on the wrong foot, worrying about the cash flow and rushing to get the property up to standard (before they let it out),” Rachel says.

All the properties, which the couple source, are off market. They speak to anyone who meets landlords to pick up leads.

It could be the milkman or postman, but mostly it is tradesmen, such as bricklayers, electricians and joiners. Rachel and Ben ask them if they know of any landlords intending to sell up or buy property and will then approach them directly. They also contact letting agents.

Ben says: “They seem to differ slightly from estate agents. A letting agent is going to help someone rent, whereas an estate agent is going to help someone sell as well.”

Some estate agents in their experience substantially over value properties, whereas the letting agent declines to give a figure to the owner and refers them to Ben and Rachel’s company.

“We’ve had quite a lot of introductions where the landlord said: ‘What do you think this is worth?’ That’s then where we work with our brokers,” adds Ben.

The pair also recommend lease options to investors who have more funds at their disposal. Ben and Rachel themselves have options to buy three of their rent-to-rents down the line. In the meantime, the owners benefit from having a guaranteed rental income every month.

The couple’s journey began at the crash course. “I booked it when Ben was asleep and I thought he’s going to kill me, but he was like yes, let’s go for it. We’d just moved house and got a dog which we lumped on family members.”

Then, after the BRR course, they became part of the academy community. It gave them access to contracts, a solicitor on standby to give advice, mentors and a network of other members who had built portfolios.

Ben compares the experience to having a security blanket. “It’s been amazing. Everything is in one place with one straight route for support.”

Rachel agrees: “Ben wouldn’t be full time without it, and we wouldn’t be generating the revenue we have without it. We’re so grateful to Samuel and his team for giving us the essentials we needed.”

One of her closest friends and a former colleague, with whom she worked for eight years, also enrolled on the training after seeing their success and how they have changed for the better.

They could never go back now to their old jobs. Ben says: “When you look at being employed it’s like being paid to forget your dreams.”

When Rachel went into agency nursing and then business another of her nursing friends asked her how she felt about not having a guaranteed income. Her reply was: “It’s only not guaranteed if you’re not going to put the work in. Your boss could sack you tomorrow.”

Rachel and Ben appeared on Winners on a Wednesday to inspire others from a working-class background like theirs to follow in their footsteps.

“We’re just average Joes. We came on Winners on a Wednesday to show anyone can do it,” says Ben. “Coming into this we were so apprehensive, but once you’ve got the training under your belt and get that confidence it’s about belief.”

Samuel was impressed by how much effort they put in to get where they are: “Ben and Rachel worked extremely hard and deserve their success. What they’re doing is so smart. They’ve educated themselves and are investing in property very strategically. I always say property is the second-best investment. The best is in yourself. I’m really pleased to see how they’ve grown. I’ve heard nothing but good things from their investors.”

BEN AND RACHEL’S TIPS

“The best type of property to buy with £100,000 of equity is a BRR all day long.”

“You’ve got to focus on money-making activities and monetising your time.”

“You’ve got nothing to lose by coming to the crash course. It costs £1.”



CHAPTER 11 – SASKIA WEAVER

Ex sales consultant is making 5k-7k a month by passing on bookings to grateful academy members

Everyone on the Samuel Leeds Academy learns the same strategies to become wealthy in the property industry. And yet, like no two people paint the same picture of a scene, each student develops their own way of implementing what they have been taught. It is a creative process that sees individuals emerging as accomplished entrepreneurs with the world at their feet.

Saskia Weaver took the canvas she was given through her training to build a multi-layered business centred around the rent-to-rent method and deal sourcing.

In two years, Saskia took control of seven properties, paying the owners a guaranteed, monthly rent and then, with their permission, renting out the accommodation for a higher amount.

When her furnished accommodation became oversubscribed, she hit on the idea of passing on her customers to her fellow academy members and taking a cut. In addition to selling deals to investors, it makes for an extremely healthy bank balance. She is also financially free at the age of only 27.

The cash flow from Saskia's enterprise fluctuates from month to month, depending on the season. However, one of the houses under her control – a large HMO in Liverpool – brings in around £10,000. Along with another two rent-to-rents in the city and four more in Reading, her portfolio personally makes her about £7,000 per month, she says.

The referral side of her business is just as lucrative. She earns £5,000 to £7,000 every month from charging a 10 per cent commission on the value of the bookings which she passes on.

The entrepreneur sells two deals per month on average. Her fee for each one is £3,000 which sometimes she shares with a co-sourcer.

It is a generous income by anyone's standards, but then again Saskia never doubted she would be successful, knowing her capabilities.

Before entering the industry, Saskia was a sales consultant, selling facial products and body treatments for a medical aesthetic clinic. It was her first sales job, and she became the 'top sales consultant' out of about 60 clinics run by her employer in the UK.

The salary was modest but what appealed to her was that she could top it up through commissions and there was no ceiling on her earnings.

"I liked the fact that I could control what money I could make," recalls Saskia.

She earned between £2,500 and £3,500 a month – a fraction of what she makes now – but enjoyed her work.

And yet, lurking in the background, was a desire to own a business. What product or service to sell was still to be worked out. However, what the young employee did know was that she wanted to get into property. She was saving up to purchase a buy-to-let when she discovered Samuel Leeds and thought 'absolutely not.'

"I saw him on YouTube. I can't even remember the first video it was, but he's got a good energy about him, and I think that resonates with a lot of people."

She 'binge-watched' more of his videos and then attended one of his £1 crash courses with a friend. Afterwards Saskia signed up for the advanced training.

"I told a few of my friends, and they said, 'Oh my gosh, you've been scammed. I was like, oh no, please don't say that!"

Then she went along to another of Samuel's events and bought a second course, only to be told by her friends that she had been scammed twice. With these 'noises in her ear,' she asked for a refund, but was advised to go to the course before finally making up her mind.

Afterwards she had no hesitation in joining the academy. A year later she left her job, mainly on the back of the income from her rent-to-rents.

It took Saskia six months to clinch her first rent-to-rent agreement. She was still learning and admits she was slightly relaxed about securing a deal.

"I wasn't as full force as I should have been. But once that penny dropped I was like wow. You home in on that energy to take the action. After that it just snowballed."

The breakthrough came from crewing at events and immersing herself in the environment, while also benefiting from the guidance of the mentors. Their comments were both frank and encouraging.

One mentor told her she wasn't 'doing enough' and it gave Saskia a nudge in the right direction.

Samuel also motivated her to carry on. "He said: 'Look you're doing great. He was the pat on the shoulder that I needed."

Recognising she was 'not the most organised person,' the budding businesswoman started to put into practice what she had been taught to do, which was to keep track of her calls. That enabled her to see exactly how much time and effort she was putting in.

"When I did that, that first week was when I secured my first two deals."

She agrees with her guru that people new to property often give up or feel disheartened after spending just a few minutes on the telephone to agents and landlords and being rejected.

Saskia's sales experience helped her to leapfrog the 'wannapreneurs' who devote more time to the theory than the practice. She acquired a business partner and had a clear action plan which was to generate revenue through rent-to-rents and selling investment opportunities in the housing market.

It was at the crash course that she was introduced to the rent-to-rent concept. "It was really good. I resonated with Samuel straight away. He was very likable and for me it was just a no-brainer. He was saying you could be making £700 a month from a property you don't own. I said yes please."

With new building sites sprouting up all the time in Liverpool, Saskia's serviced accommodation business is thriving. She is the go-to person for many companies seeking a place for their contractors to stay in while working away from home.

After a successful run in 2023, when her two Airbnbs in Liverpool were regularly 'booked out,' reservations dipped slightly towards the end of the year. Then business picked up again as Saskia was inundated with enquiries from construction firms.

The two houses were in such demand that she and her partner took on another rental property. And still companies looking for accommodation were contacting her.

Realising this was a massive opportunity, and not wishing to turn anyone away, she used the 'amazing network' in the academy to meet the demand.

"I know people with property, so I said, yes we can accommodate them."

Through chat groups Saskia asked academy members whether any of them had houses in Liverpool because there were contractors in need of accommodation there.

"I said I've got long-term bookings, two, three, four months. So, I get an influx of people messaging me and I'm like can you do it for this price because they're contractors. Their budgets are a bit limited.

"They replied yes we can do that. When it's a long-term booking people prefer that as you're not having the hassle of constant check-ins/checkouts. These guys are still making about £1,000 profit from that.

"Basically, I'm passing them those bookings. I'll just mark up on it or I'll take a 10 per cent fee. It varies depending on the booking."

She adds: "What I like is there's no liability. I'm not managing it for them but I'm saying, hey I've got this long-term booking. Do you want it?"

The companies Saskia deals have a budget of £20 to £40 per night per person. Unsurprisingly, the most valuable booking she has received so far is for the largest property in her portfolio, an eight-bed HMO in Liverpool with nine bathrooms.

"We've got 16 guys in this house and we're getting about £320 a night for that. We're paying just under £4,000 [to the landlord] with everything included. So, we're making just over £5,000 profit on one house."

By ensuring she could meet the demand for accommodation, Saskia now has one company which constantly contacts her when their contractors need a temporary base.

“I've got 12 more guys coming down on Friday (August 2024), so I'm finding out who's got availability and I know it's for the next two to three months minimum.”

It is virtually a passive income for Saskia, and she has the satisfaction of giving someone else the trade.

“It's nice to be able to help people and they are so grateful to me. It's hands-off for them as well. It's a win-win for everyone.”

The arrangement works well for the investors because they avoid having to market their property or pay online travel agency fees.

Saskia ‘aggressively’ promoted her properties in Liverpool by offering discounts for long stays and including her contact details in advertisements for people to check availability.

She also produced tester ads to find out whether a particular property would work as serviced accommodation.

OpenRent was one platform she used to find properties. She also reached out to companies to bring in business.

“I'd say have you got things going on? At the time they didn't but then they came back to me six months later.”

The importance of sowing seeds was one of the things drummed into her during her training. It included spending two days at Samuel Leeds' house while he scrutinised her business plan.

"It was so good. There were 14 of us and he basically tore our businesses to shreds in a good way and asked us what we were doing and how much money we were making. Then he advised us on the best ways to move forward for us and our business.

"He spent a good amount of time with me. It really was so valuable and being able to learn from other people. It's like an intense training and it's nice because it's bespoke to you.

"It's also great if maybe you're not the loudest person in the room. He still goes into each business, and you find out exactly what everyone is doing. There's no hiding."

The former saleswoman believes the academy offers excellent value for money. She paid £12,000 for the year-long programme.

"When you think about it, it's not a lot of money. I never saw the academy as 12 months. I saw it as a long game. I never had this time frame of, oh my God I've got one year to make it."

Saskia saw that she had lifetime access to valuable knowledge because there was a lot of learning material online in addition to the unlimited mentoring that was on offer.

"I thought these are skills that, worst case, if I didn't utilise it as best as I could now, I know I'm going to come back to it. I also thought I would rather put £12,000 into that than just let it sit in the bank and deplete over time. It was a no-brainer for me."

She has also made many friends through the academy, including Gavin and Mitch Vaughan from The Property Twins company. They picked her up after her car broke down on the way to her Winners on a Wednesday interview.

Next step on her agenda is to complete a buy, refurbish, refinance project. "I've got all these skills. I know how to get great bookings and cash flowing properties. I want to do that for my own properties and build wealth."

With her academy fee paid for through her earnings from real estate, Saskia pinches herself when reflecting that she has three businesses rolled into one.

“I’m proud of myself. I always knew I could do it,” she concludes.

Samuel is equally impressed. He says: “Saskia has got a really interesting way of making money in property which is unlike anything anyone has ever seen before. She’s a huge asset to the academy members, crewing at events and passing on bookings. Now she’s looking to take on bigger things and I wish her every success.”

SASKIA’S TIPS

“The crash course is a taster. Then you need to invest in yourself and surround yourself with people who want the same things.”

“Don’t compare yourself to others on the training and don’t rush the journey.”

“You don’t have to be the person that jumps to quit their job straight away. Just because you don’t do that doesn’t mean you’re not an entrepreneur.”



CHAPTER 12 – NAJ BUENO

Two Airbnbs in London make investor £8,000 a month

In a special edition of Winners on a Wednesday filmed live in front of an audience of Samuel Leeds academy students, Naj Bueno related how she came to invest in property and effectively retire.

Naj got the chance to be interviewed by Samuel after competing with two other students who gave a brief outline of their successes to the audience. She received the loudest cheer and so was invited to come on stage to talk about her journey.

The entrepreneur owns two apartments in London which she rents out as serviced accommodation on Airbnb. In 2023, the turnover amounted to around £170,000, producing an average profit of £8,000 per month.

The fact that Naj is making so much money just from two properties might come as a surprise to some people, but her recipe for success was simple. She withdrew the equity from her first property to buy a second one and then rented them out after moving abroad.

Originally from Brazil, Naj has lived overseas during various parts of her life. She emigrated with her parents to the USA at the age of five, living there for ten years until the family returned to their country.

Naj found growing up in an American/Brazilian culture very hard as a teenager, and so when she was 18 she moved to London. After working in bars and clubs initially, she landed a job in litigation support which was an entirely new concept to her.

Over the next decade her career blossomed. “I ended up as a shareholder managing director of our office in Dubai. I loved it and thrived in it,” recalls Naj.

In the end, the high-flying executive realised she needed to do something else with her life. Taking a ‘well deserved break,’ she travelled the world. Then her father became ill, and she went back to Brazil to care for him. Sadly, he lost his fight with cancer in 2023 and Naj came back to London.

“I already had the two properties here,” she explains. “I bought one in 2013 and then the other one a couple of years after that by releasing the equity. I used that as a deposit to buy the second property.”

While working in Dubai, she rented out the accommodation, handing it over to someone else to manage. Then, on her return to England, she took charge of the rentals herself after setting up the cleaning and laundry arrangements.

Through her business travels, Naj gained an insight into the serviced accommodation industry as she always stayed in Airbnbs and so that was the strategy she adopted. “It was almost like a lesson, learning what was good about some and not so good about others.” And managing two properties was ‘doable.’

This experience proved to be invaluable. Her SAs are extremely popular, achieving a 4.81 Airbnb star rating with 280 guests leaving reviews.

Naj not only benefits from the rental income, but her apartments are now worth far more than what she paid for them. She put down a deposit of 10 per cent for her first property which cost £317,500.

“Now it’s worth over £500,000, not to mention the revenue I’ve made over the last eight years.”

Many people try to pay off their mortgage as quickly as they can, but not Naj. “Rich people have debt. I actually have quite a bit of equity, but I have it because I don’t know yet what I’m going to do with it – not because I’m not going to take it out.”

By remortgaging her properties, she can receive ‘a bundle of cash’ to reinvest in more lucrative ventures. Another advantage is that this amount is tax-free. As Naj succinctly sums it up: “You don’t pay tax on debt.”

Serviced accommodation is excellent for generating cash flow, and it would be easy to pick up a few more properties in London, using her existing set-up. However, after joining the academy and learning about other money-making strategies she began exploring other possibilities.

Naj hesitated about becoming a member of the academy until seeing how much it provided to students in terms of contract and tax advice, and access to solicitors and mentors with experience in different types of property investing – as well as potential partners who could come in on deals.

As a businesswoman, she appreciated how much that kind of advice costs and how many years it had taken Samuel Leeds to build up the resources and contacts he offered. “You’re just tapping into it – £12,000 doesn’t seem a lot of money for it,” says Naj who was also drawn to the academy by the sense of community it engenders.

There were challenges she had to overcome as a property entrepreneur.

“Obviously you’ve got to learn from your mistakes if you don’t have guidance. For example, not vetting properly. Now I have a whole vetting system.”

Sometimes the Airbnb host rejects more guests than she accepts. “They have to have five-star reviews to be in my property. I don’t want parties. You should see my flat. It welcomes a party like ‘party here’ if I were to put a sign over it. I have neighbours. It’s in a private block.”

If someone only has one rating and it is a five-star one, she will consider the length of the booking before arriving at a decision as to whether to allow someone in her property.

“For example, I don’t take anything less than three nights and that’s only if it’s to fill gaps. It’s a minimum of five nights stay [usually].”

The exception is if the person wants to stay two nights between Sunday and Wednesday. She never agrees to two-night bookings on a Thursday, Friday or a Saturday as this indicates to her that the person intends to have a party.

“Even in my smaller apartment I don’t do it. I’ve learnt these things over the years the hard way.”

Guests wishing to stay for a long time are asked to show proof of identity. “If I’ve got somebody in there for 84 nights, it averages out at about £10,000 a month. That’s with a monthly discount. This is on the second property. I had one booking last year. The other one also gets long bookings.”

In the summer she charges around £5,000 a month for that property and £4,500 at other times of the year.

The second property Naj purchased is a three-bedroom 1,500 sq. ft. warehouse type apartment. When she acquired it, there was only one

bathroom, even though up to eight people could sleep there. So, after three years of running it as it was, she added an ensuite.

“I refurbished the whole thing and made it like chef’s kisses. It cost me a lot, but I’ve made it back and I obviously increased the value of the property.”

The purchase price was £820,000, plus stamp duty, with the refurbishment coming in at about £100,000. She also spent around £10,000 on decorating the apartment.

The amounts are high, but so are the rewards. The flat is now valued at £1,350,000 and her rental income also shot up because of the improvements.

“You make your own luck, but I got the first property in 2013 and that year alone my property in Kings Cross had a 23 per cent increase in value. So, I sucked it out straight away and left 25 per cent there and took the rest out.”

Thanks to her investments in real estate, Naj has an enviable lifestyle. She describes it in three short sentences. “I don’t have a job. I refurbish furniture. I go for walks in the forest.”

Samuel asked her how long she had enjoyed this life of leisure, to which she replied, ‘long enough to be bored.’

Naj, who is ‘still 40 years young,’ knows what it is like to be retired but does not want to deteriorate.

“I could live my life the way I live it now. Fill my days with refurbishing furniture. It’s great. I’ll do that because I love it. But if you’re not constantly proud of yourself it can bring you down.

“You have to be doing things to be proud of yourself. That pride of what you did five years ago eventually wears off. So, you have to keep on the move. It’s good for your health. It’s good for everything.”

Her sights are now set on using the buy, refurbish, refinance, rent strategy to increase her wealth.

“That makes sense for me. I just refurbished my first apartment myself. I love that whole construction side of things.”

Her plan is to buy a property, renovate it, and then either rent it out as serviced accommodation or an HMO and recycle her cash by taking out a mortgage based on the new value of the house/flat. If it was a big enough deal, she would consider a joint venture on the project.

Before the pandemic Naj invested in tech start-ups but believes property is the best investment. “You can’t go wrong with bricks and mortar.”

She found Samuel through Instagram and messaged him on her birthday, explaining her father was sick but her intention was to come to London to attend his course.

She follows him on social media and loves his ‘crazy’ challenges – including his headline-making ‘pants’ stunt when he was dumped in London in just his boxer shorts and set the task of earning £3,000 in 24 hours.

The challenge, viewed thousands of times on YouTube, was inspired by his claim that: “You could strip me naked, drop me in the middle of any city and within days I’d be making money through property!”

“I love that stuff. I work in sales. I know what it takes to bring yourself back up after so many knockdowns,” says Naj.

She agrees with her mentor that being successful in property and life is about adopting the right attitude, as well as having the knowledge. In her opinion, positivity and thinking of yourself in abundance demonstrate a winning mentality.

“Obviously, you should worry about how much things cost but if I want something I get it because I’ve worked hard for it.”

Having belief is also important, she emphasises. It was that conviction which enabled her to do so well in the corporate world.

“I didn’t know what litigation support was and I built a multi-million-pound portfolio for my company.”

Naj is looking forward to beginning a fresh chapter in her property adventure, having already secured two ‘yeses’ after picking an area and making some calls at the start of her training. She spoke to one landlady who has property in Chelmsford and other parts of Essex. It is slightly outside her patch, but Naj is investigating whether she can work with her.

“I had my first job when I was 12. I love it. I’ve always wanted to be an international businesswoman. I did that because that was the dream. My dream now is property. I can just see the zeros. I’m not a fancy person. It’s not about having things to show off. It’s really about succeeding in myself.”

Samuel says: “I’m excited to see Naj’s journey in the coming months and years. She didn’t go to university, and yet she is already making as much as a brain surgeon!”

NAJ’S TIPS

“Be positive. If you can see it in your mind, you can hold it in your hands.”

“You have to invest in yourself.”

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 13 – ADAM LOW

Carpenter notches up £20,000 a month from serviced accommodation and deal selling alongside his business

Still only in his twenties, Adam Low makes around £20,000 a month from selling property deals and renting out furnished flats in upmarket areas of London and Surrey. He combines that with running his roofing and carpentry business, making use of his practical skills in both.

Some months Adam can earn even more, depending on how many deals he sells and how many bookings come in for his serviced accommodation.

In total, the businessman controls 13 properties which is remarkable given that until October 2022, when he joined the academy aged 25, he knew nothing about property investing. None of his family was into it either, but Adam says that from an early age it was ‘in his head’ to go down that route.

He became a carpenter after leaving school and has been in the ‘building game’ ever since. Working on multi-million-pound houses showed him the potential of property to create wealth.

“I’ve seen what property can give you in life. I also knew that if I was to get into it myself, I could link my building skills with property.”

Adam was right. Thanks to his training, he now has a highly lucrative real estate business.

“On the rent-to-rent side we’re making £9,000 to £10,000 profit a month and then with the deal sourcing we’re selling on average about three deals a month.”

His commission on three deals works out at £9,000. The figures trip off his tongue. Nevertheless, he is surprised by just how much money he is making so soon into his journey. It took him about a year to build his portfolio and he is continuing to amass assets.

“To go from zero to making this pretty much passively is crazy. I’m not even taking a wage from the property side of things. Most of my income is still coming from my building side. Whatever money comes in from property is getting reinvested. We’re saving up for bigger deals.”

With his business partner, who is a family member, Adam is trying his hand at generating capital from property developing, submitting an offer on a house. The plan is to convert it into two flats and build four more apartments on the land.

An architect advised them there is a good chance of obtaining planning permission for the development as there are other flats in the area. If granted, they will be seeking investors to fund it.

Much of Adam’s success has been founded on harnessing other people’s money for projects. “We get private finance for a lot of our rent-to-rent deals from students on the academy. What we tend to do is ask for £5,000 for 10 per cent return.”

The students benefit from learning through investing and if they ever need a helping hand or advice Adam and his partner are ‘always on the other end of the phone for them.’

It was one of his partner’s colleagues who helped the entrepreneurs to clinch their first rent-to-serviced accommodation deal in February 2023. He owned a property which was available for rent and discovered they ran a serviced accommodation business.

“We made an offer and told him what we were going to do to it. We’ve still got it now. He’s happy and we’re happy,” says Adam.

It could not have come at a more opportune moment for the two men as they had spent four months up until that breakthrough receiving continual rejections.

“Prior to that we were still learning. Once we took it on and got into the nitty gritty of it, it was like a lightbulb moment.”

Adam believes his lack of confidence played a huge part in preventing him from securing a deal early on. Before training to be a property investor, he rarely made calls because he worked with his hands.

“I remember when I went on the rent-to-rent training Samuel Leeds said: ‘Everyone go out and make some calls. When you come back from lunch, I want to hear what’s happening.

“I was just staring at my phone for about 10 minutes trying to make a call to this landlord. I was so nervous I even sat in my car doing it. I didn’t want anyone to hear what I was about to say.”

When he finally plucked up the courage and said he was looking to take on a company let, the landlord told him to go away because he was wasting his time.

Despite this knock-back, Adam persevered. A few landlords agreed to let him view their accommodation but when he got there they changed their minds. Adam therefore altered his approach.

“I created a script. Every time I got a no, I’d think maybe my script’s wrong. I’ll tweak it. Now I’ll just pick up the phone and talk to a landlord and it’s fine.

“It is tough at the start, but nothing in life worth having comes easy. It’s just changing what you’re used to and learning something new.”

Taking on his first deal was daunting too, he admits. “I was scared because we used our own money. We’d never invested in property in our life.”

He and his business partner both worried about being unable to get bookings after putting in £2,500 which included the first month’s rent of £1,600 and £900 for the furnishings. It was a gamble, but it worked out well.

Adam describes it as a ‘little golden nugget.’

“It’s probably one of my best properties. Over Christmas that made £2,300 net profit.”

In a bad month the studio apartment makes £1,200 [per month].

But after the first deal landed in their lap, the second one was a disaster.

Two months after they secured the studio apartment, they took on five rent-to-SAs in Bradford and another one in East London. The Bradford enterprise was a joint venture with two other academy trained property entrepreneurs.

Originally two houses, which had been turned into five one-bedroom flats, the Bradford accommodation was already being managed when the group took control of them.

The rental income looked promising on paper. They carried out their due diligence and thought it was a fantastic deal. For the first three months the properties made good money, but then the revenue dropped.

“It was losing money because we weren’t able to get all the rooms filled out all the time. Some months we would have three rooms fully occupied and two would be empty. So, we decided to get out.”

Adam concedes he bit off more than he could chew, taking on so many properties at once in an area which was new to him.

“I’d never been to Bradford in my life. We didn’t realise what could happen and what the pros and cons were. We ended up losing about £2,000.”

Having never once visited the property, it was a ‘great lesson learned,’ he says. “I’ve had bad deals but there’s no deal I regret because I have learned from it.”

Adam learnt not to invest in an area which he was unfamiliar with, and not to take on too much in one go.

He never lost faith in the rent-to-rent strategy. “I always knew it would work, especially after getting my first one and seeing everyone else in the academy succeeding from their rent-to-rent deals.”

At the two-day Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme, held at Samuel Leeds’ house, Adam told his mentor-in-chief about what had happened in Bradford.

“Samuel said you need to forget about Bradford. That’s past now. Just get on with it and keep expanding and moving forward.”

Taking his advice on board, the partners went on the hunt for more deals nearer to home. They began investing in Surrey and London, taking on

serviced accommodation properties in Epsom, Kingston upon Thames, Chelsea and Hampton Court. Since then, they have been 'killing it.'

Through his company, A Plus Properties, Adam offers to renovate a landlord's property in return for him being given a reduced rent. He contacts the owner directly through sites like OpenRent because he finds it easier to negotiate that way, rather than dealing with an agent.

By using his skills as a carpenter and his background in the building trade, he keeps the cost of the refurbishment low.

"It might have cost me £3,000 to make this place look nice but it might cost someone else £10,000 to £15,000. That's how we've got most of our recent properties. We still pay deposits and upfront rent. If we're doing a refurb, we normally ask for a grace period.

"For example, when we took one on in Kingston, we asked for a seven-day grace which he gave us. Then as soon as we picked up the keys me and my partner were there seven days in a row from about 7am to about 2 o'clock in the morning grafting and getting this place done."

Adam negotiated the rent down from £1,500 to £1,200 per month and spent £2,000 on the improvement work, in addition to £1,200 for furnishings. The one-bedroom flat was on the market in a week and achieves an occupancy rate of 85 to 90 per cent.

"We made a £2,000 profit last month (January 2024) on that one. I've only ever dealt with flats mainly because in the areas we're going into house and rental prices are quite extortionate. For me flats work better. There is less maintenance as well."

He acknowledges there is some resistance to rent-to-rents from landlords, either through having had a bad experience or hearing a horror story. It might be that the property was badly managed by an untrained person, or by someone who had to be evicted for failing to pay the rent.

Adam likes to meet the landlord for a coffee to discuss a deal. "It's all about trust and giving the landlord that extra bit of security. If they've had a bad experience, you can say we've got a number of properties. You can speak to other landlords we've dealt with in the past."

As an added incentive to take him on, he points out there can be problems with tenants, whereas his company has no tenants' rights which means the owner can get his property back almost immediately.

Adam also tells the landlord he owns an accommodation company which rents out properties to professional people, contractors and many international relocators. He will supply references, as well as personal guarantors.

When viewing a flat, he looks for a good location and what needs doing to it, if he is to refurbish it. He then calculates his costs. If they are too steep, he rejects the property.

Demand is also an important consideration for him. "You've got to know who your property is going to be for."

Sites such as Property Intel and AirDNA enable him to research the market. He also works out how much cash flow the property is likely to produce and his running costs, including the rent he pays to the landlord.

Adam thought at first it was only tourists who stay in Airbnbs but when he started having his own lets, he realised many guests are in fact professionals and relocators.

"I rarely have tourists in mine. A relocator is someone who's just purchased a house and there's a chain. They need somewhere temporary to live for x number of months. You can provide it to them. They can't rent it from an agent for less than six months. That's why we bridge the gap."

He charges a nightly amount. His profit is what remains after paying the rent to the owner of the property and deducting his expenses which includes employing cleaners.

Before completing the rent-to-rent training Adam came along to one of Samuel's crash courses. Three days later he enrolled on the academy, receiving mentoring and tuition on structuring and systemising a business, and employing staff. This has also proved useful in his carpentry business.

The academy has given him access to a large network of potential investors, and he has even sparred with his guru as the latter prepared for a charity boxing match.

“That was great fun. It was nice to do business, as well as box, especially with Samuel and other academy members. It kept me focused.”

Reflecting on what the academy has given him, Adam concludes: “It’s been the best investment I’ve ever made.”

Samuel is impressed with his student’s achievements: “I always enjoy teaching students the different property strategies and then seeing how they adapt them to match their skills. Adam is also finding rent-to-rents for other academy members, introducing them as a package deal and then selling them. He’s done incredibly well.”

ADAM’S TIPS

“Money will always return. If you’re scared to make that first initial investment, you just need to go for it. You could make it big if you put the work in.”

“Sign up to the £1 crash course and like me you could be sitting in the Winners on a Wednesday chair next year.”



CHAPTER 14 – JORDAN JONES

One door closes and another opens for footballer forced to hang up his boots after a serious injury

One door closed and another opened when a serious injury ended Jordan Jones' professional football career as a teenager. Instead, he became a taxi driver and now also makes money from investing in real estate.

Still only 25, Jordan already owns seven properties and controls five others which he rents out. In addition to selling property investment deals, his average earnings amount to £10,000 a month.

Some months he makes way more than that. His takings depend on the number of deals he sources and the level of bookings for his rentals. In March 2024, for example, Jordan celebrated his best month ever, recording a profit of £25,000.

It was while out driving his taxi that he first came to appreciate just how much money there is to be made from property.

“I’d just dropped someone off for £3.20, helped them with all their shopping and got in the car. Then I closed a deal for £10,000. I was thinking what am I doing? I’m in the wrong game.”

It was a surreal moment on his journey to becoming a successful property entrepreneur. At one time he had a very different future ahead of him in football.

Jordan was just seven when he joined his hometown club Swansea City and then worked his way up through the academy, playing professionally as a scholar on an apprenticeship after leaving school. As a member of the under-18s team, he played against the likes of Mason Mount, Tammy Abraham and Conor Gallagher, all of whom went on to win caps for England.

Then in his second year Jordan suffered an ankle injury during a match against Fulham. After two operations he had to stop playing football and was left wondering what to do with his life.

“I was umming and ahing whether to go to university and study business, work with my dad, or a few other things I was thinking of doing. I ended up going with my dad. He was like come and work with me. I’ll teach you business.”

Aged 21, Jordan began driving taxis for his father’s firm, working 12-hour shifts five to six times a week and giving rides to various ‘characters.’

“That was good for me. Some people may have thought I’d taken a step backwards because I was driving taxis instead of playing football. But I felt it put me on the right path to explore different types of business.”

The former Swans midfielder had already bought properties in the traditional way, saving up for the deposits when, in February 2023, he came along to a Samuel Leeds crash course with a friend.

Jordan admits his attitude was slightly ignorant. “I thought I’ve got a bit of property. I kind of know what I’m doing. But then every time Samuel said something me and my friend would look at each other as if to say we know nothing.”

After this introduction to the world of property investing, Jordan took up the offer of advanced training and has been on ‘a high ever since.’

His strategy is to buy properties in Swansea which are so dilapidated that they are unmortgageable. He then renovates them and takes out mortgages based on the new value to release capital for further investments.

Explaining how the buy, refurbish, refinance method works, Jordan says: “You buy the property whether it be through actual cash or a bridge [loan]. You’ll then add value through a refurb and refinance it at the higher value. So, 75 per cent of that comes back to you and hopefully you can recycle most of your money to use that again and again.”

It differs fundamentally from the buy-to-let strategy where the investor puts down a deposit of 25 per cent of the purchase price which locks in that money.

Swansea is a good place to find bargains as prices are not extortionate, the young businessman says. Jordan paid just £39,500 for his last property, although that was ‘a steal,’ he concedes.

He never expected to obtain it for that amount as it was on the market for £50,000.

“There wasn’t a lot of interest in it. It was around October. I said to the estate agent I’m offering this on the Friday. By the Monday it’s gone. It’s only over the weekend that the vendor [can] think of it because I’ve got other offers on the table. She came back to me on the Monday afternoon and said your offer’s been accepted.”

The only problem was that at the time all his money was tied up. Jordan was in a quandary, but the solution lay right under his nose.

"I went home to my parents and was like, I don't know what I'm going to do. I've had this offer accepted on this property. I'm probably going to have to package and sell it on."

Jordan told them about the opportunity and mentioned he intended to bring in an investor and give them a 10 per cent return on their money.

"I remember going upstairs and my dad called me and said talk to me about the deal again. He ended up putting the money in. He will receive a fixed return of ten per cent when I refinance the property."

The refurbishment with fees came to around £34,000. Based on a predicted gross development value (end value) of £125,000, Jordan will be able to obtain a mortgage and pull out more than £93,000 – having only contributed about £75,000 to buy and do up the three-bedroom property. There was no stamp duty to pay because the purchase price was so low.

His plan is to convert it into serviced accommodation for six guests, with two single beds in each bedroom. He expects to make a profit of £1,000 to £1,500 a month from just that one property by renting it out mostly to contractors which he has found works best.

Jordan's parents are delighted by their son's achievements but questioned initially whether he was doing the right thing and were worried he was wasting his money on training.

Apart from the buy-to-let strategy, Jordan had no knowledge of other investment methods before attending the crash course.

"My dad was making a joke saying I'm your mentor. You don't need Samuel Leeds. I'm going to help you with this."

His father was also investing in bricks and mortar, but not using creative strategies – much to Jordan’s frustration when he became a member of Samuel’s academy and began learning the ins and outs of the business.

“He invests the traditional way just buying cash. He adds value but doesn’t refinance. I said dad you could have ten x’d your portfolio if you had done buy, refurbish, refinance.”

It took a few months for Jordan to see his efforts bear fruit. “I’d be working upstairs doing the training and my figures and my dad was like any deals? Is it going to work? I just kept working away and finally the breakthrough came where things started happening.”

Samuel teaches his students that when they find a BRR possibility, even if they have not got the money to buy the property themselves, they can still sell the deal to an investor. Jordan followed that advice and soon struck gold, selling two such deals in quick succession while still being trained.

One earned him a finder’s fee of £3,000 and another one £5,000. This includes a £2,000 fee for him to manage the refurbishment of the property for his client.

Then he beat that by banking a sourcing commission of £10,000. It might seem a lot, says Jordan, but after consulting his mentors he realised the return on investment was huge.

“When my investor refinances, he’s going to make £13,000, have the property and pay me £10,000. It makes sense for him. The purchase price was £74,500, the refurb £40,000 and the GDV is around £195,000.”

Once the work is finished, his customer will release over £146,000 from taking out a mortgage, allowing him to recover all his costs plus £13,000, according to Jordan’s calculations.

Jordan secured all the deals through the same agent. During his training, he was taught how to assess the likely value of a house or flat once it has

been improved. He seeks the opinions of three different local agents on what it will be worth.

Then Jordan applies a formula supplied by the academy to work out if the numbers add up to a good investment. He looks at the average square footage price for the area and takes his builder with him on each viewing of a property.

He also includes a contingency of five per cent of the anticipated cost of the renovation to allow for any unexpected work that needs to be done. At that point it is down to him to use his skills to negotiate the purchase price and lastly to present all the figures to his investor.

When you buy is a factor in what sort of a deal you can get in Jordan's experience. He clinched the property that earned him £10,000 around Christmas.

"I don't think many people were trying to buy around Christmastime. It's an uncertain time in the market."

He agrees with his head mentor Samuel when he says that the more offers you submit the luckier you get and that the key to success is finding a motivated seller.

Jordan has the advantage of not having to compete with first time buyers or buy-to-let investors as the properties which he buys are unmortgageable and are therefore cash purchases.

Apart from deal selling and his buy, refurbish, refinance ventures, Jordan also decided to invest in rent-to-rents. He and two business partners had been flirting with the idea for some time. Then two properties became available through a landlord Jordan knew.

The ex-footballer offered him a guaranteed monthly rent and a three-year contract with a six-month break clause, should either side wish to end the agreement. He also undertook to keep the property in 'pristine condition.'

Jordan made it clear it would be advertised on Airbnb and booking.com but that the guests would principally be contractors.

He and his partners spent late nights painting and cleaning one of the properties, while a friend with a flooring business fitted new carpets.

“It scaled from there. We took on two more last month and another one this month (February 2024).”

They spent about £1,500 on doing up the first rent-to-rent which they took on, doing much of the work themselves. It costs them £850 a month to rent the place and they managed to hook some international clients.

“They got in contact with us from Airbnb. Now we’ve housed 18 of their workers. That one property makes £800 but across the last five months it was £6,500. This month it will be £7,500.”

Jordan discovered Samuel Leeds on Instagram and quickly made progress on the academy. His biggest challenge was attracting more investors. “That’s when I started coming on the Mastermind (mentoring Zoom call) every week. Once I started telling people about what I’m doing that’s when it kicked off and they started to trust me.”

His next goals are to take on commercial schemes and to help new academy students. “I’m hoping to go full time in property, but I want to help my dad in his business as much as I can because it’s grown massively.”

He adds: “The academy has been unbelievable. I’ve met some friends for life. There are so many people I’ve connected with who have helped me along my journey.

“The environment for me was so important because you go to one of the events, especially the academy dinners, and everyone’s on the same wavelength. Everyone’s trying to improve their lives and property journey. You’re around the right people to grow.”

His parents inspire him too. “I’ve seen them come from nothing and my dad’s worked tirelessly. I used to go to work at five o’clock in the morning. He’d be up doing invoicing or something work related. I wanted to live up to his standards.

“I’m pushing myself to do well but then hopefully to leave something in years to come when I have children to give them the best start in life.”

Samuel believes his protégé could go far: “I really respect what Jordan’s already achieved at 25. He’s constantly hungry for knowledge and has a great work ethic. I think that’s also why he made a great start in football. I honestly believe he could become a name to look out for in the property investing world.”

JORDAN’S TIPS

“When you get into property you think you need a load of money to get involved but it only costs a couple of hundred pounds to become compliant as a deal seller.”

“Get around the right people who are on the same type of journey you want to go on.”

“Take action. That’s where I’ve learnt the most.”

‘Without my two partners I wouldn’t be able to scale the rent-to-rent business.’



CHAPTER 15 – JAGMEET KHALSA

Wedding photographer who developed an interest in property increases his income eight times over

When Jagmeet Khalsa appeared on Winners on a Wednesday to talk about becoming rich through property, he was going against what he was taught as a Sikh. A lot of people he looked up to in the past were secretive about how they built their wealth.

As he describes it, there are individuals in his community making plenty of money, but they do it quietly.

“In the Sikh community we do share our resources. We have open kitchens and feed people who are struggling. But when it comes to building wealth and sharing that, that’s something we’ve been taught to keep to ourselves which is fair enough.”

It might be perceived as arrogant to be boasting about how deep their pockets are or how they climbed to the top. Similar attitudes prevail in

other religions. Jag, however, wanted to inspire others to follow in his footsteps.

“When I saw Samuel on YouTube, I didn’t see anyone from my community on there. So, I thought there has to be someone who does it first.”

Before joining the academy, Jag had no real experience of property investing, other than buying a house and renting it out. He and his wife purchased a property for £150,000 in 2013. Then they moved back in with their parents and found a tenant for their home.

It made a modest profit, but his main income was from being a self-employed wedding photographer. He still earns money through that and has done so for more than ten years. What changed fundamentally was how he ran his property and photography business.

These days the Wolverhampton-based entrepreneur is earning eight times as much money as he was before and has five serviced accommodation properties, making him financially independent.

His journey to prosperity began when he attended a Samuel Leeds crash course. The father-of-two admits he nearly pulled out. “I thought is Samuel really going to teach us how to become property investors. I paid for the £1 ticket, but I wasn’t going to turn up.”

He changed his mind after seeing the tickets were sold out. Concluding that it had to be ‘a good event,’ he went along and sat on the front row.

Jag was immediately motivated to get involved. “I just thought I need to do this. I’ve got to try something different. I’ve been working on what feels like a full-time job for ten years. Even though it was my own business, I was just working in it.”

He still needed a push, though, to commit to training. It was his wife who encouraged him to register for the year-long academy programme. It was a pivotal moment for Jag who had always wanted to own property.

“That was my thing really. I thought I had to save up for a deposit – the traditional method – but joining the academy just changed everything for me.”

Through the training, Jag learnt about serviced accommodation and how it could be rented out on a nightly basis at a premium rate. Coming from Wolverhampton, he doubted whether renting out his first house for short stay lets was feasible. He could not envisage it attracting holidaymakers.

“In my head I'm thinking: is this going to work? I'm from Wolverhampton. You have this kind of bias about where you're from and it's so difficult to get past that.”

But after speaking to an academy mentor and a few others he was persuaded to give it a try.

“They were like, listen you own the property. What's the worst case? No one's going to stay there. Just put it back on as an AST (assured shorthold tenancy). I thought you're right.”

The property required some renovation, along with new carpets and furniture. So, Jag spent a couple of months doing it up. He decorated it himself, changed the lights and got a trader to skim the walls.

“By November (2023) it was ready. Then I put it on Airbnb and booking.com It's been amazing since,” says Jag who still struggles to believe how much money he is making simply by switching strategies.

“I started getting bookings and then I started learning about the type of people who are coming to Wolverhampton. That opened the floodgates. I was getting mainly contractors – occasionally relocating families – but mainly contractors now.”

They work for companies like Jaguar and Land Rover, as well as construction firms. Some are engineers servicing equipment for local breweries.

“They’ll fly in from Germany to work for a couple of months. I never knew that market existed,” Jag adds.

His profit from renting out the house, which he bought for £150,000, shot up. “I get £2,800 per month. The profit is £1,600.” To top it all, the property is now valued at £200,000. When there was a tenant, the turnover was £900 a month, leaving Jag with a margin of only £200 by the time he had paid his mortgage and other expenses.

A family from the Middle East booked the accommodation for nine months, staying there while awaiting the outcome of their application for residency in the UK. As they were not allowed to rent a place to live, they needed an Airbnb.

There is an excluded licence agreement in place which means they are guests rather than tenants. Failure to pay the rent would give him the right to evict them on the spot, in the same way that a hotel would ask a guest to leave if they did not pay for their room.

He took on a second property because the first one was occupied and then another one.

“The three that I’ve got make me about £3,000 a month.”

A joint venture partner funded the other two rentals and will get paid back first. The profit on those properties is £1,500 to £2,000 per month.

Jag secured £1,200 worth of bookings from contractors engaged in long-term work.

He obtained two of his rentals by approaching the landlords through OpenRent, explaining what he intended to do with the properties.

That was no easy matter. “It's difficult to even get through to them on OpenRent because they don't want to get on the phone. They just want everything to be messaging,” Jag says.

He received many rejections initially, but being educated and having the support of the academy helped him enormously in overcoming those setbacks. He knew, for example, how to advertise an Airbnb, systemise it and synchronise calendars. And he had a vision.

For his third property, he dealt with an agent. “They were a bit reluctant at first because they wanted to know what my vision was. That's why it's important to know who your customer is and what and why you're doing it.

“You've got to have a vision and identify a problem that you're trying to solve. Because I've done weddings for the past ten years I travel quite a lot and so I use that same story with the agent. When you are taking equipment with you, you want somewhere secure to park. You don't want to go to a hotel. You want your own kitchen.”

The mentoring on the academy was ‘fundamental’ in showing him how to produce a script that he could follow when speaking to agents.

In May 2023, Jag took part in an online Mastermind session conducted by Samuel Leeds' mother, Sue Gray, a successful property entrepreneur in her own right.

“It was on May 22. I remember the date because that Mastermind was brilliant. Sue went through crafting a story and where to start from. That was really useful.”

Everyone has a different story, based on their circumstances, which they can use, he points out.

Jag also used the one-on-one mentoring service and took advantage of the power team available to academy members, which includes lawyers, mortgage brokers and accountants.

“At the beginning I was booking so many calls. It was good to pick up the phone because doing it on your own is difficult and having someone experienced who’s been there before is encouraging.”

His favourite feature on the academy is Rate My Deal, a platform where students can receive expert advice on the strength of an investment.

“You'll basically submit all the information about your deal – what condition the property is in, what you know about the area, all your due diligence. Then one of the mentors will look at the deal and give it a rating out of 100.

“They'll identify things that you've probably missed and that's why mentorship is so useful.”

Once more his mentor was Sue who gave him a rating of 80. He went on to raise about £7,500 to put into his deal.

“I used that as almost a certificate that this is a good deal. It's been looked at by a mentor.”

Academy meals and the Monday night Mastermind slots on Zoom give students further opportunities to highlight their successes in an informative way.

When Jag went into property, he wanted more freedom. By systemising his two enterprises to reduce his workload, he achieved that.

He has a team of editors helping him in his wedding photography business which is also flourishing. He makes more money than ever before and does less than ever to earn it.

“Post pandemic I’ve learnt that you can’t do everything yourself. You’ve got to replace yourself in the business wherever you can.”

The entrepreneur also systemised his property operation which was essential as his portfolio grew.

“It got to the point where I was getting a lot of guests reach out about things like the wi-fi password and how to check in. Even though they were getting automated messages on the channel manager for bookings, they would still ring up.

“It was distracting me from finding other property deals because I felt like I was just managing a lot of the time.”

His solution was to sign up to a virtual PA service which handles frequently asked questions. It allows him to focus on expanding his business. As opposed to working in it, he now works on it.

“That’s something I wanted to do. It’s the same thing with the wedding side of things. I felt I was working in it. I couldn’t do other things and it was too much.”

Having more time on his hands freed him up to crew at Samuel Leeds Education events. “I love crewing because I want to give back. It is scary at the start of your journey in property, so it’s always good to find people you can relate to.

“I met three people on the advanced training that I was crewing at, and they were just asking me questions I knew I would have asked them previously.”

Jag sums up the academy as all-encompassing in that it offers a place to do business and enjoy social interaction alongside the training. He also found that having someone to turn to in challenging moments was immensely helpful, along with the additional services, such as Rate My Deal and Quote My Refurb.

One of Samuel's missions is to educate parents like Jag about financial literacy, as well as personal and business development, so that they can pass on that knowledge to their children.

For example, Jag, learnt about good and bad debt and interest only mortgages. "That's huge. It's so good to learn everything that Samuel taught us and then to pass it on to my kids as well."

To fellow Sikhs who might want to get into property but feel conflicted in some way or uncomfortable at coming to a crash course because of their religion, his message is to go along anyway: "You're going to get judged regardless of what you do in life."

Samuel praises Jag for his desire to give back by serving others. He says: "Jag is not only financially free, he also received the academy People's Choice Award. Now he's systemised his wedding business he spends so much time volunteering to come and help other people. He's got a massive heart, and I can see that he genuinely cares about the community. I appreciate that so much."

"We love people from all walks of life and religions and it's great to have had Jag sharing his story."

JAG'S TIPS

"Delegate your work. Trust the process."

"Know your customer and what you're trying to do in property."

"It's not about what you leave your kids. It's about what you leave in them."



CHAPTER 16 – HARLEY AND CONNOR MCLEOD

Brothers learn how to take their thriving business to the next level

Brothers Harley and Connor McLeod, from Kent, were already successful property developers when they joined the Samuel Leeds Academy to take their business to the next level. They then went on to secure a rent-to-rent agreement, in addition to their existing portfolio of HMOs, and learnt about marketing and creating a brand.

Their five houses are valued at more than £3m and produce a monthly profit of £10,885, which gives them the ideal platform to continue expanding.

Before going into property Harley was a mixed martial arts boxer with over 100 amateur fights to his name until a serious injury to his hand obliged him to quit the sport at the age of 17. His hand healed thankfully, but then he went to university to study business and management.

Midway through the course he and his brother decided to take up property investing. After finishing university, Harley went straight into their business. The brothers were keen to build something together so that

Harley could work for himself. They also wanted a portfolio which would create generational wealth for their family.

Connor's background was in construction. He owned an engineering company for about 10 years before teaming up with Harley. After completing some training, the pair launched their new enterprise with some funds which Connor had saved from his previous business.

They were perfectly matched for each other. Harley had time to grow their company, while Connor had the experience.

In 2018, the pair bought a two-bedroom buy-to-let for £42,000 in Blackburn after going there for a business meeting. They paid for it in cash and lived there for a month while they ripped it out.

"Harley learned a lot on that job because it was his first build job. He learnt how to fit kitchens and bathrooms. From then on, we just built and expanded it. That was a baby stepping stone," says Connor.

"We only spent £10,000 doing it up. That included all the expenses driving from Kent to Blackburn. We shopped around and got a kitchen from B&Q for £800 because it was on sale," Harley remembers.

After the property was improved, it was valued at £68,000. The revenue from renting it out amounts to £550 a month and they pay £137 for the mortgage out of that.

The partners manage all their projects and do as much work as possible themselves to keep down their costs, using the money saved to deliver a high-end finish.

Adopting the buy, refurbish, refinance strategy to recycle their money, the entrepreneurs did up seven houses in five years and sold two of them.

The properties bring in £24,190 a month in rent which is ‘totally passive’ as they employ a letting agency. It gives them a profit of £10,885 a month after their expenses and allows them to concentrate on finding more deals.

After finishing the advanced training on the academy, Connor and Harley had a one-to-one consultation with Samuel Leeds at his two-day Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme.

“We brought a guide of what we’d done and how we did it, telling our story from day one to where we’re going to end up, so Samuel could see it and discuss it,” Connor recalls.

Their mentor-in-chief was impressed, and they left with an action plan of how to develop their business.

Self-management and motivation were the key factors which enabled them to expand their operation in a relatively short time, believes Connor.

“At no point have we stopped. Through dead periods, we’ve gone out actively looking. Now we’ve got people ringing saying, ‘We’ve got an HMO available. It’s 24 beds. Do you want to buy it?’ Yes. So, we’re now bringing the work to us as opposed to finding it.”

As their experience grew, they moved on to more ambitious schemes, turning to investors and banks for funding. Their proudest achievement was converting a pub/hotel in Sheffield into a 14-bedroom HMO.

“It needed completely gutting. So, the only thing we kept was the four walls,” says Harley.

The brothers purchased it for £310,000 and spent just under £400,000 on the conversion, which was substantially less than the original builders’ quote of £1m.

Connor says: “We refinanced at £1.1m, so effectively we got all our money out with a bit of cash left over to go into the next deal.”

The rental income comes to £9,800 a month. With a 16-bedroom HMO, which Harley and Connor also took on, their revenue was about to increase by another £9,500 per month when they were interviewed for Winners on a Wednesday.

The bulk of their properties are in Sheffield. They chose it as their patch after researching various places in the country and discovering that Sheffield was the most populated, fastest growing city.

“It’s the fourth biggest city in the UK, population wise. Not many people realise that. They’ve all got to live somewhere. There are plenty of students there and professionals, and there’s a lot of growth. When we first went, there were two cranes in the city. Now, there are towers going up everywhere. It’s the place to be,” Connor says.

One of their two flips was refurbishing a terraced house. Connor adds: “We paid £310,000 for a three-bed terraced and sold it for £385,000 in the same year.

“The finish is what gets you the money ultimately but also the right areas. There are still areas in Sheffield where you wouldn’t want to buy houses. But in the right postcodes and the right roads, if you know where they are, you can smash it.”

Their portfolio is valued at £3,050,000, says Harley, but far from easing back their goal is to achieve an end value of at least £1m on each property which they renovate.

It is why Harley and Connor no longer take on four, five and six-bedroom house refurbishments as they simply do not ‘stack up’ in the market. Instead, the businessmen eye up ‘bigger numbers.’

They point out that the paperwork is the same for a small or a large deal, and it is more economical to maintain a larger property.

“When you’re paying a builder for a day, you split that [cost] between 14 rooms. If that’s a four-bed, he’s still got to go out for a day, and you’ve only got four rooms to split it against. So effectively that month it wasn’t worth running,” Harley explains.

It took hard work and determination to get to where they are now, and those qualities still underpin their business. During a house improvement project, Harley spends the first fortnight on site. He then keeps a careful watch over the tradesmen who carry out some of the work. That means early starts to travel from his home in Kent to the north.

“It’s simple. I wake up at three o’ clock in the morning, travel up there and back the same day or stay overnight.”

The brothers are shrewd operators when it comes to buying a property, offering a figure of their choosing, rather than the asking price.

Connor says: “Rather than us having to haggle over a price, it’s more a case of saying it’s worth this. It’s a take it or leave it deal. The value is what we’re going to get it valued at [once the work has been done]. There is no other value that matters.”

They were offered a 49-bed HMO spread across two buildings, with an asking price of £3m. The cash flow was good, but it needed a lot of work doing on it and so they turned down the opportunity.

Connor adds: “When you factor in the refurb and it’s going to be empty for probably a year it doesn’t work. The costs have to reflect what needs doing.”

Harley says the biggest mistake people make when buying and doing up houses is spending too much money and then employing the wrong builder.

“A lot of people buy a house and think they can give it to a builder and turn back up when the job’s done. If you don’t see it through the stages and just

wait till the end, it might look nice but behind the scenes is what's going to cost you money."

If the plumbing and electrics are not installed properly, it can prove costly to rectify the fault later, and a lot of builders are unaware of the specific regulations governing house shares. Harley gives them a list of all the jobs that need to be done to keep within the rules.

"When you just put a normal builder in and say I want an HMO, you're expecting them to do all the research on the requirements, such as fire doors. They haven't got the time. And if the builder does know those requirements, he's going to charge you for it, so the deal might not stack."

Harley and Connor also target properties for sale in Article 4 zones. Many investors avoid such areas because of the limit on the number of HMOs permitted. The brothers do the opposite.

Their tactic is to search for the pockets within these zones where the ratio of HMOs to ordinary houses is no more than 20 per cent. Once they identify a spot and a suitable investment house, they then seek planning permission to rent it out room by room, knowing that it is likely to be granted.

The advantage is that there is less competition for large properties which could be rented out as house shares. At first, Connor and Harley pinned the local council's register of HMOs on the wall of their office with a map to show the locations. Now, using artificial intelligence, they download a heat map to see where there is a concentration of properties with multiple occupants.

Connor says: "You can concentrate on the areas that haven't got many HMOs inside the area, rather than the red zones which are saturated. We made it work once on one of the deals. It took the standard six months to get planning permission, but it wasn't a hard deal because we had the evidence."

Obtaining planning consent is not always straightforward. It took about nine months for their pub conversion scheme to be approved due to opposition from neighbours and a trade association.

“All the locals were against it, but they didn’t even know what we were going to produce. They were saying they didn’t want slums. Now there’s a neighbour two doors down who’s come and seen it and has nothing but positive things to say about it,” says Connor.

The entrepreneurs bought the pub as a going concern and had to get a local planning consultant and an architect on board to assist them with the application. Part of that process involved Harley and Connor in having to produce a viability report as to why it could no longer be run as a pub.

It was turned into a 14-bed HMO in 2021 and is now valued at £1.2m because the rents increased.

Connor and Harley calculate that over five years they made about £850,000 in equity. They are in debt to the tune of £2m after taking out mortgages to acquire properties but regard it as good debt.

“Debt doesn’t bother me. It’s what makes me more money. I’m leveraging from it. Without that we would have a couple of buy-to-lets. So, we need to use debt. Debt is the creator of the wealth,” Connor emphasises.

Harley agrees: “It’s good debt. People need to learn the difference. If that was all finance on cars it wouldn’t be a wise choice. However, the revenue it earns covers the debt. It covers it by 50 per cent. So, why would we ever be worried about having £2m in debt?”

After the investors met Samuel in 2022, they turned to a different strategy, taking on a rent-to-serviced accommodation property which was projected to make a minimum of £1,000 a month.

“That’s the one thing I got from the academy that I wouldn’t have had before because I wasn’t looking at it. If I was starting again, I’d go down

that road for cash flow. It's not necessarily something I'm going to be doing all the time, but we've got the experience and the set-up. If a deal comes along, you can drop it into the portfolio. It's fast cash in the bank," Connor reflects.

During their training, they also learnt how to raise finance and promote themselves to advance their company, Hudson Harley Property.

"A big part for me was the marketing. On the accelerator training it was simple, straight to the point and that's what we came for," concludes Connor.

Samuel says the brothers make a good team: "I love the way Harley and Connor brought their skills together. They are proper grafters, as well as having the education and knowledge. I look forward to seeing their continued progression."

CONNOR AND HARLEY'S TIPS

Connor: "Training is key. Get a mentor. You might have the motivation but if you go in the wrong direction you're not going up, you're going sideways."

"We never have big pots of money sitting in the bank. We'll lend it out to an investor, get our returns on it and when our deal is ready to go we'll call it back in time."

Harley: "Be willing to do what others aren't."

"If I was setting out in property, I would start with the deal selling strategy because you are not opening yourself up to any risk."



CHAPTER 17 – JESS MOSS AND JOE MADIGAN

Waitress turned property manager eyes up retirement at 25

Jess Moss was a young waitress working exhausting hours when she met a man and fell in love with him. He was one of her customers and they went on to set up home together.

In many ways it is an everyday story of romance, except that Jess and her partner Joe Madigan became financially free from property when she was just 19. In one month alone, the couple, from Liverpool, made a profit of £16,000, using strategies such as rent-to-rent and selling deals.

They also own a property staging and management business and help overseas investors to find lucrative opportunities in the UK housing market. Thanks to their training on the academy, they are consummate professionals.

And yet only a few years ago Jess and Joe were struggling to make their way in life. When Jess met Joe she was working up to 70 hours a week while also studying business at college.

"I'd work 12 to 14 hours a day and not have a break nor sit down. The pay was absolutely shocking. I was on £6.50 an hour when I first started at 16," remembers Jess who admits it was disheartening.

Joe, meanwhile, was a joiner and was similarly dissatisfied with his lot. He had his own small business but felt he had no direction with no one to guide him. That all changed when one day he took a break and travelled up the coast to Southport where Jess was then working. As he puts it, she was his waitress and he 'chatted her up.'

Two and half years later Joe and Jess were expecting their first child and had moved into a new house.

Joe says he was always highly entrepreneurial, going along to car boot sales and wanting to do something for himself but could never find a clear path of how to achieve it.

By contrast Jess knew exactly what she wanted to do. "I wanted to buy mum her first house. That's what pushed me into property when I was a kid."

Sadly, Jess never got to fulfil that ambition as her mother passed away about a month before she and Joe attended one of Samuel Leeds' £1 crash courses on property investing.

Jess says it was a 'massive eye-opener' as it introduced her to all manner of strategies she never knew existed. Joe, on the other hand, was sceptical. "When I heard about strategies like deal selling, I thought this can't be legit. It's too good to be true."

He changed his mind when he began going to networking events and saw people making 'stupid money.'

After the crash course Jess and Joe took up the offer of a week's training on serviced accommodation and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). They followed that up by enrolling on the academy.

Jess broke her leg four days into a new part-time job which she subsequently took on while studying accountancy. It proved to be a blessing in disguise as it enabled her to concentrate on her property training and building up a business with Joe.

Jess went on to become a full-time property entrepreneur and Joe too handed in his notice as they grew their operation and branched out into other strategies like buy, refurbish, refinance.

It was not just a chance meeting that propelled them into the industry. Joe says he almost died in 2017 after breaking his neck while riding a mountain bike. “For a full year I was stuck in my room in a body brace. It took a while for me to get back to work.”

He had come across people in their fifties complaining of back pain and thought if he was like that then what would it be like when he was older.

“That’s what made me get more entrepreneurial because I was comfortable as a joiner.”

They took out a loan to join the year-long academy programme, with Jess contributing the £6,000 she had left over after paying her mum’s funeral expenses. They were warned during their interview for the academy that they would be given the tools to succeed but there was no guarantee they would do well.

Jess and Joe were determined to make a go of it. The fact they owed money motivated them to work hard. “We needed it to work,” says Joe looking back.

Jess believes anyone can be successful in property provided they try and are prepared to fail.

“Failure is only the way you succeed even more. A lot of people stop when they fail and that’s how they don’t become successful. There have been

loads of things we've failed at. It's been a massive learning curve for us. But we didn't stop, and we've now gone up and up. We see that in the profit margins each month."

Joe likens their journey to falling in a lake and then breaking through the ice, with their business 'really kicking off' in two months during the early part of 2024.

Jess reveals the figures: "On average the profit is about £7,000 to £8,000 a month. The turnover the month before that was the best month we'd seen. Turnover was £28,000 and we profited £16,000."

That is more than what she would have earned in a year as a waitress, says Jess.

"My best friend thought I was too young to be doing this. She's like live your life. Go on holiday. Explore the world. I said that's what I want to do but if I work really hard for four years and scale up my business, I could be retired by the time I'm 25."

Joe and Jess play to their strengths. She has the grounding in business, handling the property acquisitions and lease options, while Joe's forte is negotiating rent-to-rent deals.

It helps that he is naturally 'chilled' as he has had landlords screaming down the telephone at him when he mentioned that he wanted to take on a property on a company let.

One landlord claimed a tenant had grown cannabis in his property. Joe reassured him that this would not happen if he was controlling the accommodation. After explaining the benefits of a rent-to-rent arrangement he obtained a viewing.

He points out that his company maintains and manages the property, making it hands-off for the owner who also has no agency fees to pay and will receive the full market rent. There are other significant advantages. If

he fails to pay the landlord his rent, the agreement can be ended immediately.

"If you give a tenant a five-year lease, hoping they're good, if they don't pay, you're stuck paying the mortgage or paying their legal fees to get them out. With us it's like a phone contract. If we don't pay, we're out."

Some landlords are against company lets because they have heard horror stories about parties being thrown in properties and bad guests arriving.

Joe emphasises that they mainly accommodate contractors and people relocating to the area and do not permit one-night stays. They also carry out checks on their guests and take a deposit from them. This is in addition to having noise detectors in the property and a system which turns off the electricity if the sound exceeds a certain level of decibels.

Jess' 'speciality' is lease options. She stresses the gains to be had from entering into a lease option agreement. For a property owner who is finding it difficult to make a profit on a rental property it can be a boon, especially if they are losing money.

"We had one landlord whose mortgage was £950 and all they could rent the property for was £800, so it was taking a loss every single month."

It was also worth less than what he paid for it in the wake of a recession.

Joe says they are helping landlords out as much as they are helping themselves. "If they're in negative equity, they're stuck. They can't sell it for what it's worth because they don't want to take a loss on it – and they're losing money each month on it because they don't know the strategies of HMO and SA."

Jess and Joe offer to rent the property for a fixed term of three to five years and maintain it during that period. Then, when the term expires, they have an option to buy it at the price originally agreed, using the profits from renting it out at a higher rate to put down the deposit.

Prices go up and down, depending on the area, but there is a reasonable chance that the property will have increased in value by the time they come to purchase it.

These days they also have foreign investors wanting to sink money into their projects. One Qatari investor, who already had a buy-to-let in Liverpool, contacted the pair hoping to acquire more.

“We said to them don’t do buy-to-lets. It’s a dying method. BRR is a million times better,” says Joe. “Instead of making £300 a month until you get your money back, why not pull out after a year or two and turn it into serviced accommodation.”

As a result, the investor paid them £4,500 to find the deal. They will also provide the project management and stage the property which will top up their earnings.

Their first year in business was a rollercoaster experience with good and bad days. One of their biggest challenges was having to relinquish their two rent-to-SAs in Liverpool. They had only just set them up when it transpired there was a head lease restriction preventing them from being rented out as serviced accommodation.

“We’ve had deals fall through as well, but it happens all the time,” explains Joe, whose boss gave them a large storage container to put their furniture in after they had to vacate the accommodation.

They both feel their lives are better, despite being busier than ever. Jess says: “That’s because we’re doing something for ourselves, for our future. But we’re also creating something which is the most rewarding thing.”

They are also getting paid well and are taking on staff to replace themselves after consulting their mentor Samuel on the Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme.

Right from the beginning of their training the couple realised the importance of networking and attending as many events as possible. They still go to some of the crash courses for the networking.

“Your network is your net worth, like Samuel says, and that is so true,” Jess concurs. “Out of everything he says I take that as gospel. It’s all the different people you meet. You take different notes from each other and can help one another.”

Jess is a ‘million per cent’ glad she joined the academy., as is Joe who found it enlightening. Jess also feels she broke a family curse by attaining wealth.

“It was a family curse. Everyone was in debt. No one owned houses. It’s the same with university. No one went to university before me.”

“There is debt but it’s good debt now. We’ve been leveraging that as well,” Joe clarifies.

Jess agrees: “The academy was good debt.”

Samuel is full of admiration for how the young entrepreneurs have applied themselves: “Jess and Joe invested in themselves and are now winning big time. It’s been great working with them, having them at my house and on all the coaching programmes and the dinners. Everyone speaks super highly of them. I have huge respect for their work ethic.”

JESS AND JOE’S TIPS

“There has to be some fire in you to succeed.”

“You need to invest in your education.”

“Your network is your net worth.”

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 18 – MARTIN ADAMS

One deal gives a property entrepreneur financial independence

Property entrepreneur Martin Adams is not driving around in a Bentley just yet or flying to exotic places in a private jet, but he is financially free. In fact, he could have retired after his first venture.

Martin moved out of his house and rented out the rooms, giving him a passive income that paid his bills. It would have been easy to sit back and do nothing at that point. Instead, he branched out into other investment methods after registering on the academy in March 2023.

Seven months later he left his full-time job to concentrate on his property business which makes him about £3,500 a month. He has a simple way of explaining the concept of financial independence, using his own example.

“The way I put it to people who don’t quite understand it is just do whatever you want for a month. Then at the end of the month I’m going to give you £3,500 and all your bills are going to be paid for. That is what essentially financial freedom is. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want and then at the end of the month you get £3,500.

“Anyone not earning a large salary would take that opportunity because you can go on holiday, enjoy [being with] friends and family, and go on these adventures that you could never have gone on because you were tied into a job.”

Like hundreds of students before him, Martin’s voyage into the world of real estate investing started with the £1 crash course.

He was sat at the front and asked Samuel for some advice on what he should do with his house. Martin who worked in the building trade had been gradually doing it up and therefore had some equity in it but was in two minds as to whether to refinance or sell the property.

After attending the crash course, he signed up for the buy, refurbish, refinance to HMO training and then decided that was the strategy he wanted to pursue.

“I had a lodger for a while who was paying £700 a month just for the room. I just thought I’ve got four bedrooms here, do the maths, and all of a sudden it makes perfect sense.”

Having moved out into rented accommodation himself, he rented out his house room by room after obtaining a consent to let agreement from his mortgage lender. It cost him £250 which was added to his mortgage. Now his rooms turn over around £3,000 a month, half of which is profit, he says.

“That gave me financial freedom, just that one property. I’ve kept my outgoings extremely low. I don’t live lavishly. I’ve got an old van.”

Martin also discovered his house had rocketed in value. He bought it for £190,000 a month before Covid hit, putting down a deposit of £35,000, and spent around £30,000 on refurbishing it.

After extending the bathroom, renovating the kitchen, putting in carpets and redecorating it, the desktop valuation was £300,000. So, Martin chose

to remortgage the house to its new value to release capital for further investments.

“That one purchase alone has pretty much set me up for life because I’m going to pull out over £100,000 and then buy two more properties in the East Midlands. I’m going to do them up and turn them into HMOs and that’s going to boost the value again.”

At the time, he had a successful business carrying out French polishing and hardwood floor restorations, but hated what he was doing.

“Unfortunately, I couldn’t manage it properly. There was too much work coming in and I wasn’t delegating my time in the right way. In the end I let that go.”

Then he went into providing luxury property management for an Essex-based company before going into property full time in October 2023.

Financial independence allowed Martin to progress rapidly after signing up to the academy.

“That was the main reason I was able to proceed and excel so quickly. After that, I networked a lot and got a serviced accommodation with my business partner.”

They obtained a rent-to-rent deal on a one-bedroom flat in Tunbridge Wells, with Martin securing a ten per cent discount on the rent. He also negotiated one month free of rent while they did it up, with no deposit to pay.

“The refurb cost us about £1,500 and we did that in about three weeks. By the time it went live the bookings pretty much paid for the rent.”

The partners pay the owner £895 a month and then rent it out at a higher rate. It gives them a profit of over £1,000 a month which is passive income.

Their outgoings are very low. They pay the rent, the utility bills, the Wi-Fi and a cleaner, keeping any money they earn on top of their expenses.

Through the academy Martin learnt how to search sites like OpenRent, SpareRoom and Gumtree for good deals.

“We found our one on OpenRent which is a platform where you can speak directly to landlords, book viewings and negotiate there on the day.”

Martin had the advantage of being able to show photographs from his first project which demonstrated how he could improve a property and stage it.

“Once the landlord saw what we can do he was happy to reduce the rent and to give a grace period because he knew longevity wise it was going to work for him.”

Both the landlord and the entrepreneur benefit from the arrangement. The owner has peace of mind knowing that his property has been given a facelift and that it will be managed for him. He also receives a guaranteed rent each month.

The academy provided Martin with the contract to use for a company let agreement. Martin and his partner have a 12-month rolling contract. If they default on the rent, they can be asked to hand back the apartment in 14 days.

Martin, however, is confident this will not happen, after identifying a lucrative income stream from working with insurance companies in the area. Again, it is a win-win for both parties.

“There are a lot of properties around there that are having work done on insurance. So, the homeowners will be having something done to their house which requires them to leave the property and stay somewhere else for a couple of months.

“Because Tunbridge Wells is quite a historic and prestigious area in Kent, they don’t want to leave that. So, we supply them with fairly cheap accommodation in a nice area which is affordable for the insurance company.”

Once the guests leave, the insurance firm brings in a new family in need of temporary accommodation.

The entrepreneurs found their niche by chance when one of their guests asked if they could stay longer while their house was having work done on it.

“We found out who their insurers were and then we went direct to the insurer and said this is what we can offer you. We can give you a 25 per cent discount on monthly stays and they loved it.”

There is a system in place to ensure the flat is available for long stays. At the start of a week, it can only be booked for a minimum of three days. This requirement rises to seven days for a booking made the following week and then 14 days the week after that. It must be booked for at least a month after that period.

“That just washes out all the little single bookings in the future. Through the training you learn how to systemise it and make it as hands-off as possible.”

Each guest receives a welcome pack when they reserve the property, along with the entry details the day before arrival.

“We have a check-up throughout their stay to make sure everything’s OK. Once they leave, they get a [message] saying if they would like to book again there’s a 10 per cent discount.”

A cleaner who has the same diary as theirs goes in and makes sure everything is in order. If anything requires fixing, she contacts a

maintenance man who carries out the repair. Martin's company then picks up the bill.

They also use a channel manager, a piece of software which co-ordinates bookings across multiple websites.

Due to the way the apartment is systemised, the income from it is virtually passive.

"It's about an hour away from me and I've been there twice in nearly a year. The last time I went there was in October last year. It's minimal work. That's what gives me the freedom to then to go up to different parts of the UK to invest elsewhere because I know that looks after itself."

It was through the academy that Martin learnt about the lease option agreement strategy. He describes it as the 'unicorn' of all the different types of investment deals which can be used to make money in the housing market.

After completing a four-day course on the strategy he joined as many landlord and property pages as he could on social media, hoping that the algorithms would feed him information and contacts.

The next day he woke up to find the first post at the top of his Facebook page was from a landlord offering his 'tired' HMO to anyone interested in taking it on.

Lots of people messaged the landlord, but Martin was the one who was picked out. He is convinced his training gave him a head start.

"I knew exactly what to say and how to present the offer to him. Out of 140 applicants he had, he chose me to go ahead. I think I was the only one out of them that had the Samuel Leeds treatment."

Two tenants were leaving when he turned up. Then, as the lease option agreement was being drawn up, another tenant left. With the landlord

living in Wales and the property in Boston in Lincolnshire, it was time-consuming for him to visit it.

Martin has an option to purchase it in five years' time for £130,000. His assessment is that it will be worth around £185,000 by then, leaving him with £50,000 equity. Meanwhile, he will rent the five-bed HMO from the landlord and then let the rooms individually to increase the rental income.

Once more Martin negotiated a reduced rent. For the first three months the rent is £500 a month, rising to £750 per month until the agreement expires. He estimates the refurbishment will cost about £10,000 which includes repairing a roof at the back of the property, fitting new carpets and giving it a fresh lick of paint. Then each room will be rented out for £450 per month.

The overheads are low as each tenant is responsible for their electricity usage, with meters in each room.

“All we have to do is pay for the communal electricity use, like for the oven, the electric showers and all the lights.”

As there is no gas supply, the energy bill only comes to about £65 a month, with an additional £100 to pay for the Council Tax.

“The profit on that property will be around £1,200 once it's refurbished. I've already got a couple of tenants who pay for all the bills. So, I'm going to do up the rooms that are currently available and move those tenants into the rooms to keep the cash flow coming in. Then after three or four months it will be fully tenanted out and fully restored.”

He adds: “Coming from a tradesman background I do like the probate properties and really rundown properties and turning them into something myself. I do all the management, the design and quite a lot of the build because I enjoy doing it.”

When Martin launched his flooring business, he went from having £800 in his bank account to achieving a turnover of nearly £100,000 in his first year, he says.

“We used to do floors in multi-million-pound houses in London and we had contracts with Burberry, Christian Dior and Harrods.”

But it was hard work. “I was going all over Kent and the southeast of England running my business, doing 10/15 hours a day, and I hated it.”

Now he is never stressed and ‘sleeps like a baby.’ “I have all the time for the gym. I’m eating well and I’ve got so many more friends. I just want to talk about property all the time. People ring me up from the academy asking how do you work out this and can you give me a commercial valuation on that and my phone’s going all the time.

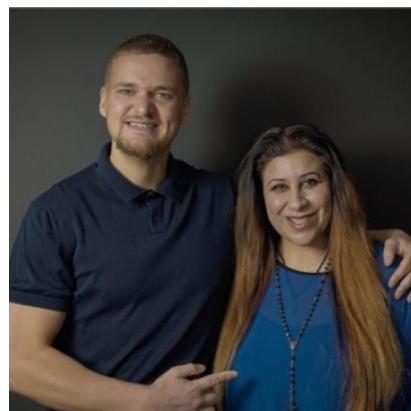
“Adding value to people’s lives through the experience and education I’ve received for me is just priceless.”

Samuel praises him for doing so well. He says: “Martin has pulled off some perfect deals and has a brilliant business model with the serviced accommodation. Now he’s positioned so well he can double or triple his income easily within the next six to 12 months. This is just the beginning for Martin. I look forward to seeing what he achieves in the next year.”

MARTIN’S TIPS

“You have to spend money to then receive it at a later point in life. You might spend £10,000 and in 12 months that pays you tenfold.”

“It’s so important to get the right education in property and do your due diligence.”



CHAPTER 19 – KIANA PAUL

Niche business provides a passive income for a businesswoman with a chronic health condition

Kiana Paul has a chronic health condition but that does not stop her from having a successful career in the property industry – in fact quite the opposite. It gives her a passive income which enables her to enjoy a relaxed lifestyle.

Kiana specialises in providing shared accommodation for doctors and nurses from overseas working in hospitals in England.

She established her niche business using the rent-to-rent strategy to obtain properties which she could let as HMOs. The set-up costs were minimal compared to how much money she could make from them.

Within a year of going into property full time she had amassed a portfolio of five properties generating a monthly profit of £5,500 and earning her the nickname of ‘HMO queen of the academy.’ Crucially, it made her financially free. The revenue covers her outgoings, leaving her free to seek more money-making opportunities including acquiring her own assets.

Kiana previously worked in the NHS on and off for ten years, starting out as a PA to an office manager and later becoming a project manager. Towards the end of her time in the health service she started a commercial cleaning firm and from there opened a launderette.

Her life became one long routine of work and little sleep. She was putting in more than 140 hours a week. It was a ridiculous number of hours to be working, she admits in hindsight, and she became incapable of making decisions.

So, the businesswoman sold her cleaning company and closed the launderette. With the money, she bought an investment property in Izmir, a coastal holiday destination in Turkey which she frequently visits.

That was in March 2019 and over the next four years she rented it out. It was a small place, only producing a modest income of £300 to £400 per month. However, it was cash in her hand which rolled in automatically without her having to do any work.

Then Kiana found Samuel Leeds and her life was transformed. At the time she was employed by Amazon as a delivery driver and one day found herself stuck on the M25 because of a protest. To kill some time while waiting for the motorway to clear, she went on YouTube and ‘up popped Samuel.’

“That was the start of everything,” Kania recalls. “I quit my jobs three days later. I was going to quit anyway because I wanted to start a business. I just watched Samuel and that was it. I knew where I was going. I knew instantly.”

She had been wanting to get into property for a long time but took it no further after her first investment as she became ill with fibromyalgia.

Describing how it affects her, she says: “It’s a condition for life. I can’t die from it, but the symptoms are very similar to lupus or MS. It doesn’t stop

me. What I found out was delivery driving actually helps me. The more I move the better I am.”

Having had her interest in real estate revived by Samuel’s educational videos, she sold her property in Turkey to join the academy in March 2023.

Her acquisition abroad proved to be an excellent investment. “I paid £27,500 for it. It was a new build. I pulled out my money and more than doubled it. I got £60,000.”

Business is in her blood, she says, and the academy provided an ideal training ground for her.

“I knew that was going to help propel me forward. I needed the knowledge.”

Kiana was already aware of some of the methods used by investors to make money in the housing sector, but there were gaps in her knowledge. Lease option agreements were new to her, and she knew nothing about commercial development.

Another attraction of the academy was the mentorship and network which it offers to members.

“Because I’ve been in business, I know how lonely it is. I really needed to socialise with the networking.”

From being isolated, she was chosen as the spotlight speaker at one of the training events, surprising herself by managing to survive ten minutes of addressing an audience.

Kania thrived in the environment and success came quickly. Within a month of being on the academy, she clinched her first rent-to-HMO.

“I’ve also got an SA (serviced accommodation) as well. That was a joint venture. I got that one in May. I got my next one on July 1st and then from

there it just keeps going. I've got HMOs in Birmingham, Coventry and Leicester and one in London now. This one's got nine beds and nine en suites. That's a work in progress because we're currently working on the figures."

Kiana hopes the owner will entrust more properties to her once the deal is finalised.

All her house shares had licences when she took control of them and some were already furnished, leaving her with hardly any work to do, and a healthy bank balance.

"Just from the five rent-to-HMOs the profit per month is £5,500. With my very first one I was only making £600 [a month] but it doesn't matter because I've got other landlords now through that."

When looking for new rentals to take on, Kiana looks for existing HMOs close to hospitals as all her tenants are doctors and nurses. The property has to be no more than a 15-minute walk or a three-minute drive away for it to be a viable proposition.

She finds properties matching her criteria through Rightmove, searching for houses with five and six bedrooms in a 10-mile radius of her chosen area and then rings the agents.

Kiana explains that she is a property investor and enquires whether the accommodation is available as a company let and has a licence for use as a house of multiple occupancy. The next step is to calculate what rent to offer the landlord through her company, Malakai Properties.

"I look at the maximum rent that I can get. I'll be a bit conservative. So, I do drop it by £25 to £50 on each room. I then add them all up and work out my price."

Instead of trying to negotiate a discount on the rent, she offers a higher monthly amount to secure the accommodation. The rent on her six-bed

HMO in Leicester was advertised at £1,800 and she paid £2,075. “I did go the other way because of my numbers. I’m making nearly £1,300 a month on that from profit.”

She worked out that she could earn more from the property, which has four bathrooms, by fitting separate locks on two of them. The tenants in two of the rooms were then given their own bathroom. A third bedroom already had an en suite and so she was able to increase the rent she charges.

It was also fully furnished, and the landlord paid for the locks as he picks up all the expenses.

“I just had to spend about £500 for bits and pieces and put down a month’s rent as a deposit.”

She rents out the double rooms without an en suite for around £600 and the ones with bathroom facilities for about £675. The monthly turnover amounts to £4,000. She pays the bills which come to £500 to £600 each month.

By building a relationship with the landlord more business is coming her way from that one deal. He is handing over two more of his properties for her to manage. “He’s giving me a six-bed and a four-bed. So, I won’t have to pay a deposit on those.”

The benefit for the landlord is that he receives a fixed rent every month. She then rents out each room at a higher rate to achieve her margin. He could rent out his property himself. However, Kiana says he is content to take less money because he knows exactly how much rent is coming in.

“That particular landlord owns a lot of the city centre, but he also owns stately homes as well. He’s not interested in doing what I do.”

Many people might flinch at the idea of taking on a rent-to-rent because of the risk of not filling the rooms and still having to pay the owner rent. Kiana

acknowledges it is a gamble but is confident that she will not be left out of pocket.

“I know I can rent them out. I’m pretty aggressive with my advertising. I’ll spend £200 to £300 a week if I have to. I’m always at the top of the listing. I filled my Leicester property in five days. I take a little longer on them, if I have to, but that was my quickest.”

There is also a shortage of rooms, which drives up demand, points out Kiana who finds tenants by advertising her accommodation on sites like Gumtree, OpenRent, SpareRoom and Facebook.

“All my doctors and nurses are international, so they do use all the platforms.”

She organises block viewings when she has empty rooms to fill, allowing 15 people in at a time in ten-minute intervals.

“If they don’t turn up they’ve got to wait until the next viewing. I’m literally running up and down the stairs showing them the rooms. If there are people queuing to see a room, they want it. I make them pay the deposit there and then.”

Prospective tenants are not shown all the rooms in case they think there is something wrong with them because they are all available. Instead, she only gives them a choice of two rooms to inspect, agreeing with her guru Samuel that there is an art to renting out accommodation.

“I learnt from the best. I just do what Samuel tells me to do and it works.”

The entrepreneur has power teams, including cleaners, electricians and damp specialists who help her to maintain the properties and carry out repairs.

“I just leave the key box on the outside and they make their own way in. I tell them what the issue is. The cleaners are my eyes. They will pick up on things. They’re fantastic.”

The academy lived up to all her expectations and she is impressed by the constant addition of more courses on subjects such as commercial investing, developing and auctions.

Property is making her wealthy, but she also has a much better lifestyle these days. “I’m a bit more careful now. I don’t do 140 plus hours a week. That was the problem. That was what set my illness off in the first place.

“I sleep like a normal human being. I sleep seven hours a day and make sure I exercise.”

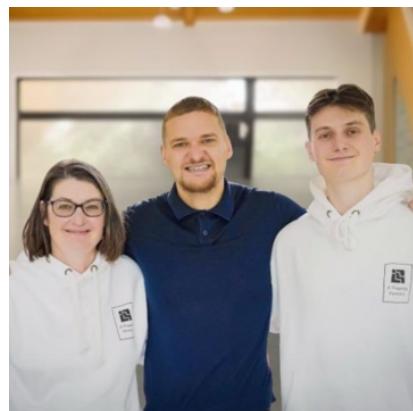
Samuel compliments her on how she has gone about building her enterprise: “What I love about Kiana’s business model is that she is implementing the rent-to-rent strategy on HMOs which is great. She’s making very good money and is financially free. Now she has mastered that and knows the good and bad areas and what rents out she can buy HMOs. She is doing amazingly well and we’re proud of her.”

KIANA’S TIPS

“If you want to go into property, get on the crash course. There’s so much information just in that one day and you learn a lot. There’s a strategy for everybody.”

“Cleaners are hard to find but once you find them hold on to them. Pay them extra. That’s what I do.”

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 20 – JOOST MIJNARENDS AND FRANCISCA OXLEY

Mother and son become financially free together through combining strategies

Francisca Oxley has her son Joost Mijnarends to thank for helping her to give up her job and become financially free along with him. Together they run a successful property business renting out serviced accommodation. The duo also source and manage furnished properties for investors. One of their proud boasts is that they sold around £20,000 worth of deals in only six weeks.

It was Joost who persuaded his mother to team up with him after attending a Samuel Leeds crash course. They then both joined the academy and went on to smash all their targets, using the rent-to-rent strategy to grow their portfolio.

Joost had a nose for business from an early age. He was 14 when he invested his birthday money in Microsoft stocks and got his father to do the same.

At school, however, he under-achieved early on. Joost, who has ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), says he found it hard to focus on things he did not enjoy.

“The only thing I wanted was to play rugby. I ended up being on a report card.”

That changed when he moved to a different area and school. Suddenly he could choose three subjects at A level that he liked and excelled in as a result. He turned into ‘a straight A student’ and was encouraged to go to university when previously that had not been on his radar.

It proved to be the wrong choice for him. As he puts it, he was not ‘wired’ for following the traditional route of heading off to university and afterwards getting a job. He hated it and soon found himself thinking of ways to make money again for himself.

“In the first year, I started my first business, an Amazon FBA kind of business. I was doing a business course, but I was sat in my dorm room not actually going to anything or learning about business. I felt like I already knew it all. I didn’t feel I was progressing in my knowledge, and I just wanted to go out and do it.”

After his first year Joost was offered a degree apprenticeship at Amazon and dropped out of university to do that instead. He was keen to get back to being an entrepreneur after seeing his parents struggle financially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Wanting to help his family and seeing highly educated members of his team being laid off spurred him on. His journey in property began with the crash course.

“One tiny decision by me to spend £1 going to this crash course on a Friday in London truly changed the direction of my life. I never knew how much that would do,” says Joost, now aged 22.

Francisca was working previously as a freelance in the travel industry. When the pandemic hit, the company she had worked for, for the past five years, informed her she was no longer required.

“I knew I didn’t have any job security, but it still came as a slight shock when I got a phone call in a shopping centre on a Saturday saying you don’t have to come back on Monday,” she recollects.

It was a double blow as her husband also lost all his work as a consultant in the same week. “He works in disaster prevention and all the international travel stopped. As a family we were massively impacted.

“Up to that point I’d always taken the approach that money was nice but maybe not an essential. The job satisfaction was more important than the money I was earning with it. The whole Covid period, however, we were under such financial pressure that I was like right, I don’t ever want to be in this situation again.”

Francisca realised that they needed to look at alternative ways of earning a living. “I was saying I want to make the money work for us rather than us for the money. We’re doing something wrong. We both have a master’s degree. We are highly educated. We’re working our socks off just to get by which is ridiculous. If we can’t get beyond that then who can.”

Property had always been an interest. So, the couple rented out their house and drew out the equity in it to buy another house.

“That’s how it started. Now we’ve reversed all of that because with buy-to-let there have been so many tax changes it’s just very difficult to make it pay.

“I wasn’t aware of the rent-to-rent opportunity. Joost cottoned on to it at Samuel’s course. That made us take the leap to go in that direction.”

In July 2023, Francisca and Joost took on their first rent-to-SA, a three-bedroom property near Leeds city centre. Joost learnt about the investment method at the deal selling course. After being taught the theory, he and the other students were ordered to ‘hit the phones.’

Joost made his calls and secured agreements on three properties. They decided to keep the one in Leeds to give him experience of the ‘serviced accommodation game.’

“We wanted to get into deal sourcing because I’d been on the training for that, but I wanted to be able to do it before I started selling it and managing it for other people,” he explains.

“Now we’ve got five SAs that we do ourselves and then we’ve expanded the business into sourcing SAs for other people. Essentially, we want to help people do what we’ve done. We want to help them find serviced accommodations in areas that they are looking for and then help them manage them.

“The five are just our own [rent-to-rents] and in total we’ve got nine now.”

Francisca says the management side of their operation is naturally growing as Joost is good at sharing his knowledge and success.

“At one point I remember he said he’d got a 25-night booking. On the back of that he got approached by somebody who said I’m not managing this on my SA. How do you do that? I want you to manage my SA on my behalf.”

Joost says an investor from the Philippines, whom he met at a course, asked him to manage his rent-to-SA in Leeds because he was struggling to run it due to the time difference.

“In the last two months we’ve had two direct bookings for two months. It was someone who stayed for a month and then extended again. He’s been able to have it profitable. We take on an investor. We source the property for them and then manage it at 10 per cent.”

Francisca acknowledges this is low compared to other management companies, but says they want to ensure their investors make money.

“We’re in it for the long term. It’s very easy to take a cut of 20 per cent. It can then be quite hard to make the deal profitable for the investor. We’ve taken the approach that it’s still early days. Let’s start at a rate we are comfortable with, and we know that we can make it work for our client.”

Combining packaging and selling deals with managing serviced accommodation properties for investors, along with their own rent-to-rents, provides them with a healthy income.

Joost set himself an extreme Financial Freedom Challenge to earn £10,000 in one month from sourcing investment opportunities. Francisca thought he was being hugely ambitious, only to see him double his target.

“From the start of February to mid-March we pretty much made £20,000 in sourcing alone. It’s crazy. I didn’t think we would ever get to that level,” Joost says.

They also exceeded their other goals after drawing up a business plan. Their aim was to make £2,000 from their SAs, £800 from management and £3,000 from selling deals in one month.

By then Francisca was back in work and decided that would give her enough of an income to leave her job. They not only surpassed those figures – their serviced accommodation continues to perform well.

She stepped back from her job in January 2024 to concentrate on property with her son. They share the responsibilities of running their business. Francisca describes herself as the analytical person. She handles the accounts and looks at how they can optimise their profits, while Joost is more active on the sales side.

“I’ve done a bit more marketing and sourcing because I pulled her into this to begin with. So, I was able to build a brand.”

Francisca is full of praise for the academy. “It’s amazing, and the network is incredible. People say you need to surround yourself by the people that you aspire to be. Having that network is really good, plus the access to mentors and professional people when you need it.”

When they took control of two flats in Brighton, she was able to speak within a day to one of the mentors who is a lawyer to get her opinion on the contract.

“It’s that little bit of handholding that really helps because it means you’re just so much more confident that you’re taking the right steps forward. Otherwise, you end up making mistakes that are very costly.”

Joost found that being in a network with like-minded individuals was important for his development as when he was away from the academy there were so many distractions and things to do. However, putting himself back in that environment by attending an academy dinner or a training event gave him a fresh impetus.

He also became one of the leaders of the academy’s Leeds Inner Circle networking group. All these elements encouraged him to make calls, network and establish contacts which down the line could bring in business.

Joost was also determined to get his brand out there after finishing the four-day Deal Selling Masterclass.

“It’s all about creating that funnel for the leads that eventually come towards you. That doesn’t just happen overnight. You have to consistently put the work in to do that.”

When Joost opted to go to university, Francisca had her doubts about whether it was right for him. She felt it was too theoretical and believes

many people who study business expect to get a sales or marketing job after they graduate, rather than setting up a business.

She feels university is not geared towards entrepreneurialism and it is not pushed in school either, even though becoming a property investor transformed her life.

“I had people at work asking how I felt [after leaving]. I said, ‘I feel free.’ Now instead of dreading my working day I’m like what should I do today? There are endless things to do, but it’s really good.”

She is also grateful to her son for bringing her on board. “It’s total credit to him.”

Samuel believes they both deserve to be congratulated. “Joost and Francisca say the management side of their business grew organically, which is good. There is very little risk if you’re managing the property. You’re not putting down any money or guaranteeing the rent. I’m so proud of them.”

JOOST AND FRANCISCA’S TIPS

Joost:

“You have to be able to apply yourself to your trade and learn.”

“Always be open to new ideas and open to new people. One person you meet could change your life forever.”

“You have to constantly deliver the best service, stick to what you believe in and continue working on it.”

“Be consistent and don’t let little things get you down.”

Francisca:

“It’s not about the money. It’s about the time. Being financially free allows you the time to then do good things. I can’t wait to help other people with the money that we make, whether it’s teaching them how to do the same or helping others.”



CHAPTER 21 – ALEX BENNETT

Estate agent finds rich pickings after moving over to property investing

Alex Bennett was an estate agent in Luton until deciding to leave his job and become a property investor. He now controls five rentals, three of which made a profit of more than £4,000 in one month.

The businessman built up his portfolio in just a year and managed to earn £10,000 on top of that from packaging and selling deals.

Alex already had some property investing experience on joining the academy. He had been flipping houses for many years in his spare time when he stumbled on Samuel Leeds' YouTube channel.

At the time he was interested in having an Airbnb and began researching how to go about setting one up.

He was searching online for information when Samuel's name kept appearing. "I remember to this day I was walking the dog and just kept watching all these different videos that he'd posted."

Eager to learn more, Alex attempted to enrol on one of Samuel's £1 crash courses. However, the ones near him in London were all fully booked.

“I was like, man, I need to get on one now. I can’t wait a few months,” he remembers.

So, he jumped in his car and drove to Leeds where the next available course was taking place. It opened his eyes ‘big time,’ he says.

“As an estate agent you think you know a lot about property, but actually you don’t know that much. We obviously know about buying and selling and renting, but in terms of other strategies there was a lot I didn’t know about.

“After attending the crash course, I realised I could potentially leave my job at some point and create a full-time income from all these different strategies.”

The strategy which caught Alex’s attention was rent-to-serviced accommodation because he realised that in time it would enable him to replace his salary.

Afterwards he attended a Discovery Day at Samuel’s house and then registered for the academy training.

As an estate agent for 13 years, Alex was always employed in sales, although he had some knowledge of the rental sector. He started out as a trainee negotiator with no previous selling experience.

At first he was afraid to even answer the telephone but worked his way up to become a branch manager with one of Luton’s most successful estate agencies.

“That really helped me to this point now where I’ve gone from having no sales experience whatsoever, and scared to answer the phone, to going to landlords’ houses. It doesn’t matter who they are, how many people are there or what size of property it is, I’m not concerned any more. I know and believe in what I’m doing.”

His previous line of work also gave him an appreciation of the real value of houses.

Through his company, AB Accommodation, Alex offers furnished, short stay lets in the Luton area, renting properties from the owners and then renting them out at a profit.

“When we set out to do serviced accommodation, we wanted to provide a really good product that’s better than the competition – something that’s slightly different to what you would normally see,” he explains.

“We’ve focused on interior design. If you’re looking to book a two-bedroom flat in Luton, when you’re on Airbnb or booking.com ours stand out from the crowd.”

One of his SAs is called the Pink Panther Suite, the name being inspired by the fictional animated character.

“We had a bit of fun with it. We were looking online at different canvases and artwork, and we saw this Pink Panther one. I thought that looks quite cool and interesting, a bit of pink.

“Our main strategy in terms of serviced accommodation is to create something eye catching. We’ve got media walls, and a jukebox in one of them – just trying to think of different ways to stand out and deliver the best possible experience for the guests.”

The model has worked well to date, says Alex. “The occupancy has been amazing, a minimum of 85 to 90 per cent throughout the whole year in Luton.

“One property alone made £1,500 profit. We’ve got five properties now live. One has only been live as of this month (April 2024), but with three live we made over £4,000 profit in January.”

He advertises the accommodation as suitable for professionals and contractors in need of a temporary base while working away from home. Luton has good connections, being only half an hour away by train from St Pancras Station in London, he points out.

Unlike in the capital, there are also no restrictions on the length of time his rent-to-rents can be occupied.

Once they are set up, the income is largely passive, freeing him up to look for more houses that he can buy and do up. He describes that as his 'bread and butter.'

Over a period of ten years, he became a prolific property developer, working with his father-in-law.

"I flipped ten in total. That includes a detached house which we built. Some were large scale, some small scale. I want to continue doing that because I've got a great power team behind me. My father-in-law is the builder behind everything. We work well as a team."

Five of his 'flips' were outdated bungalows with 'avocado bathrooms' which needed refreshing.

His method is to purchase a rundown property on a residential mortgage which requires a minimal deposit. He then lives in it while it is being renovated and sells it for more than what he has spent on it, avoiding having to pay tax because it is a residential property.

He had finished eight of these projects when an opportunity arose to buy a two-bedroom, detached bungalow with a large piece of land.

"There was potential to build two [properties] or just super size the one that was on that bit of land. So, we built this big four-bed property."

There were problems along the way, but they carried on. "The market was on the rise throughout the whole process and Covid was around, so things

were delayed. But as things were being delayed the prices were going up and up. We developed that again, moved into it for a short while and then moved out. We just kept copying and pasting the same thing which worked well.”

Alex believes it is an underrated strategy and recommends it to any young estate agent starting out on a low wage who wants a second income.

“You’re in the industry. You’ve got access to properties and know what houses are worth on particular roads. You can come across some sellers who are looking for a quick sale. If you’re young as an estate agent starting out, your pay is not the best and maybe you can get your parents to help you with the deposit or get some investors to jump onboard.”

As an estate agent, he bought properties being advertised by his company, with his employer declaring an interest if there was a homeowner who needed a quick sale.

With the equity which Alex built over the years, he decided it was time to invest in his education after coming across Samuel Leeds.

The entrepreneur took the bold step of giving up his job before he had secured any deals. A lot of people would not do it that way, he acknowledges, but he felt he had sufficient resources and contacts to make a go of it.

“I had time on my hands where I could invest into the rent-to-rents to make them really nice, but I had a buffer to live off. Hence why I just went let’s go all in and just do it.”

Although confident of success, Alex admits the pressure was on to make it work.

“Going from a nice, comfortable income to zero was like wow, this has to work. Pressure is also in some sense good. You can’t sit around. You’ve got to be up every day and want it every day.”

While accumulating rent-to-rents, Alex also sold seven deals, working at the outset with a more experienced deal sourcer who had a large list of investors.

“For me it was a great learning experience. You can lean on them. You can do your own due diligence and look into a deal, but also get a second opinion on it from someone who’s done it multiple times. A lot of deal sourcers co-deal a lot of the time anyway.”

Alex also teamed up with other students, splitting the proceeds from the sale of the deal.

One error he made at the start was to ‘go crazy’ pursuing investment opportunities. But then, when he identified one, he had no investor to sell it to. A lot of his deals came from agents.

One property was offered to him when he had already put his funds into another rent-to-rent. “I would have taken it on myself, but it was not the right time.”

Over time the businessman established his own list of customers through attending networking events which he had never done before.

“I wish I’d started earlier. I see young people in their early twenties, even less than 20, and I’m thinking fair play, you’re in the right room.”

Along with absorbing all the different strategies for making money in the housing market, key points for Alex during his training were learning how to manage his time and structure his day.

Inspired by him, two of his friends went on to join the academy, including a manager at the estate agency where he worked.

“I was explaining all the strategies to him and what I’d learnt, and he said this is a whole new world to me. He went to the £1 crash course and saw there was a real future.”

After registering on the academy, he took on three rent-to-rents in quick succession.

Alex gave him advice during the process, which he appreciated, and they now ring each other every day.

“Having him join was really good. It’s nice to have someone who’s that close to you that you can enjoy the good things. Also, sometimes there are struggles and things you want to talk about. It’s great to have that person to talk to.”

Alex has ambitious plans. He wants to expand his serviced accommodation business and manage other people’s SAs, in addition to branching out into other strategies like HMOs and BRRs and flipping more properties.

As an estate agent, he had a well-paid, nine-to-five job. He managed an office and completed two or three valuations a day. These days his weekends are taken up with looking after his children and attending to some work. He enjoys it far more.

“It got to that point in my job where I loved the place, but it was the same four walls, the same sort of people, very comfortable. I needed to get out of that.”

Summing up his achievement, Samuel says: “Alex has successfully made the transition from being an estate agent to becoming a property entrepreneur and financially free. He has found his USP because his properties have got themes and are going a bit viral on Instagram. They’re really popular. He has also given advice to a lot of people who are just getting started on their property journey with the academy.”

ALEX'S TIPS

“If you get a great deal, there are always going to be investors willing to invest into you and that deal.”

“Concentrate just as much on finding investors as hunting deals. Otherwise, you’re going to get a deal and have no one to sell it to.”



CHAPTER 22 – JAMES TRAVERS AND LISA DUGARD

Couple bank £10,000 in one month from a holiday letting business

IT project manager James Travers and former model Lisa Dugard run a successful holiday let business which they built up in their first year as academy members. In just one month their rent-to-rent portfolio generated a profit of £10,000.

The couple even managed to move house while establishing their business and are now looking at using their pension pot to buy commercial property.

James' job involves delivering IT systems for governments across the world. It pays the bills, he says, but it is a means to achieving a different way of life. After a 30-year corporate career he wants to concentrate on making money from real estate.

“I could stop working tomorrow and we would be OK,” he explains. “But that’s not our goal. Our vision is to accelerate this. Keep the corporate job for a year or two and then use that money to reinvest in property, build that passive income and then I can stop.”

It was Brexit that indirectly led him into property. It played a ‘big part’ in his desire to change his life. He felt lied to by politicians regarding the benefits that leaving the EU would bring.

James believes those advantages never emerged and it made him want to become more aware of what was happening around him.

“I realised I’m never going to get rich doing what I do. We then had Covid. I was working from home more. I like to consider myself quite entrepreneurial and at the time I saw an opportunity to start doing work with multiple clients which is what I did. But I also found some downtime in the afternoon.”

Scrolling through YouTube one day, James discovered Samuel Leeds’ property investing channel. Straight away he found himself drawn in by Samuel’s personality and successes. “I sat there for a while just watching the video, thinking I could do this.”

Realising he needed to be trained, he enrolled on one of Samuel’s £1 crash courses.

James persuaded Lisa to come along with him to the event in July 2023. Lisa confesses she was slightly cynical about the course beforehand.

“I thought it was going to be a big sales pitch and like an old boys’ club, and it really wasn’t. I came out of there going, I haven’t felt like that in a long time.”

There was a buzz in the room, and they were impressed with how much detailed content the course contained.

Only 15 minutes of the eight-hour course was taken up with upselling the advanced training. James could not wait to sign up to it. “When Samuel offered me that deal I was off the chair before he’d finished and at the back. I listened to what Samuel and the other mentors were saying. I thought I need a piece of this.”

Having experienced a difficult ten years following a divorce, James saw it as his 'route out.'

Lisa had been engaged in fashion modelling work but felt that at 35 she was reaching an age when she would no longer be able to pursue this career. Two months later, Lisa and James joined the academy. They each invested £5,000 into their company which they had just launched.

"I was like you're not doing it all," says Lisa. "I'm going to get a loan out. I didn't know what was going to happen. I just quit my job, got my loan out and here we go."

Lisa recalled how Samuel had spoken about the difference between good and bad debt and she thought he had a point.

"We'll always have some sort of debt. There's a difference when you're in your twenties and wasting debt to now we've got some debt, but we've also got profit coming in – and we've got a vision and a journey."

James, who turned 50 a few months after becoming an academy member, was also prepared to take a leap into the unknown. "I had little chance of a good retirement. I had to throw it all on red and it's the best thing I ever did. It was a calculated risk and here we are a year later."

James and Lisa used their funds to set up a rent-to-rent business. Through their company, Travard Properties, they rent five flats which they then relet with the owner's permission for a higher rate amount. Three are in Brighton. One is in Windsor and another one is in West Drayton, just a few minutes away from Heathrow Airport and the Elizabeth rail link into central London.

The entrepreneurs took on their first rent-to-rent in Windsor in January 2024. Their intention was to turn the apartment into luxury accommodation, but they felt the bathroom let it down. So, they replaced

it at a cost of £8,000, again with the landlord's consent. Their agreement runs for five years which gives them plenty of time to recover their outlay.

James admits it was a huge gamble, especially as it was their first such investment and they were putting their capital into someone else's property. However, it enabled them to charge a higher nightly rate.

As a result, they attract better customers because of the quality of the property," says James.

Its location, five minutes from Legoland and a mile from the station, makes it ideal as a holiday let. The couple got engaged in Windsor. So, it is also a place 'close to their hearts.'

While the property was being renovated they managed to bring in a tenant for a couple of months which covered their outgoings. By April the work was finished, and they were ready to hit the short-term let market. Since then, the occupancy level has been '85 per cent plus.'

James adds: "The great thing also about Windsor is our next-door neighbour is our housekeeper. She does all the cleaning. She meets and greets the guests if they need any help. So, we just let that run itself.

"That's clearing about £2,500 to £3,500 profit a month."

Lisa says sometimes they panic if it is not busy, but then last-minute bookings come in because they offer one-night stays.

"People go to Legoland, and it works. We do it in Brighton as well. We get so many. This week (September 2024) one of the flats in Brighton was out five days and we're fully booked now."

They also have a studio in the seaside resort which is proving popular.

"Our cost on the studio is about £1,500 a month. That clears easily £3,000/£3,200 a month [profit],' James says.

It takes Lisa less than 40 minutes to clean it and complete the changeover in readiness for another set of guests coming in.

James agrees that it is easy to run: “It’s on the way out of Brighton. We do the two main ones which are next to each other and then on the way out we just quickly go to the studio to sort it out.”

The partners manage their portfolio themselves, systemising their processes at home and in the business. Lisa is out on the road most days cleaning and preparing the flats, while James spends a couple of hours a week on administrative tasks. He also does the washing and ironing when working from home.

They use Uplisting software to manage their bookings through online travel agencies such as Airbnb.

They have an ‘enquiry only,’ as opposed to ‘instant book’ status on their listings. This allows them to move around bookings, and gives them more control over who stays in their apartments.

Lisa and James recognise that as their operation expands they will have to move over to an outsourced arrangement. But for the moment managing it themselves works well.

Samuel Leeds teaches his students that they need to be hands on initially to understand the ins and outs of managing holiday lets, so that they know how to choose the right management company.

Lisa believes that in the first five years it is not about getting rich. It’s about getting good. Even so, they are already making a healthy living from their rent-to-rents.

In August (2024), James says, the turnover amounted to £20,000, leaving them with a profit of £10,000 after deducting their costs. “This month

we're turning over £29,500. The running cost is about the same. That's off the five."

They staged two of their properties in August. September was therefore the first full month when all five properties were being rented out.

The life of a property entrepreneur has its highs and lows. James and 35-year-old Lisa have had to deal with some bad guests. One couple left the place in what they considered to be a disgusting state, leaving Lisa with the unenviable task of making it presentable again.

On another occasion there was a flood in the accommodation which they believe was caused by wipes being put down the toilet. In that case, booking.com covered the damage and Lisa and James cleaned it up together.

Once someone left a bad review about the facilities which they felt was unfair. But rather than confronting the guest, Lisa says they 'killed it with kindness.'

She replied, saying that she took the person's comment on board and would take positive action.

Lisa began her career working for a hairdresser's and learnt from a young age how to handle people's complaints.

"You've got to be calm, listen [and say] I'm sorry about that. What can we do to help? Ask questions."

Samuel recommends thanking people who leave a bad review as it not only keeps the customer happy, but also gives a business the opportunity to improve the offering.

James agrees wholeheartedly but at the same time is philosophical. "People are going to have their views and you can't please everybody all the time."

For their first two rent-to-rents, the couple had to put down a deposit, plus one month's rent. With furniture to buy as well, the set-up cost came to about £10,000 for each one.

However, these days James and Lisa, who live in Liss in Hampshire, try to avoid paying deposits, having built relationships with agents. They negotiated 'no deposit' on one of their Brighton flats and saved money by buying furniture at auctions.

The pair play to their strengths. James understands spreadsheets, while Lisa is determined and good at paying attention to detail.

They spent two days with Samuel at his house which gave them focus in terms of what strategy to pursue. While feeling the pressure to succeed, Lisa also took part in a charity run organised by her trainers.

"I'd had a couple of setbacks from agents and hit a low. I thought I can't do this and then I went on the run. Everyone was struggling on the way round. I could see Samuel struggling and thought if he's struggling, and he's this amazing guru, that's life."

She related the run to the marathon of running a property business and it gave her encouragement to carry on.

James also benefited from being in a positive environment on the academy, describing it as phenomenal. He met a 'rich tapestry of people' from all walks of life, and it lifted his spirits.

"Since joining the academy seeing these strategies and making them work, my whole persona has changed. I'm so much more out of that dark zone. It's been amazing on many different levels."

Samuel says: "It's been really good working with Lisa and James. I'm proud of them. They have invested their money wisely and are getting excellent returns."

JAMES AND LISA'S TIPS

"You have to invest in yourself to be successful in life."

"If you don't try you'll never find out if you could succeed. There are so many opportunities if you apply yourself."

"Get the training and take action. If it doesn't work out, go again."

"Everyone needs to have clear roles in a business."



CHAPTER 23 – DANNY GRIFFIN

Fitness coach beefs up his income with serviced accommodation

Occasionally in life you need someone to show you a different way – to shine a light even on where you have been going wrong. That person for Danny Griffin was Samuel Leeds and he remains his trusted mentor.

Fitness coach Danny had been dabbling in property for some years on the side to beef up his income, but his strategy was not working for him.

Like a lot of people, he thought the route to building wealth was to amass a portfolio of buy-to-lets. And so, he bought two properties. One proved to be a burden. Every time a tenant moved out, he had to go in and spruce it up to a certain standard before finding another occupier.

There was one other serious drawback. It never really made that much money and so Danny sold it in early 2022.

He also owned an apartment in Birmingham, which he bought off plan, but that too was not living up to his expectations.

“I was getting about £650 in rent. The mortgage payments were about £475. After paying the service charges and the ground rent, and then

paying the tax, it was like I was literally paying someone to live there," he recalls.

Then Danny spotted an advertisement for the crash course while searching for information about property. With nothing to lose, he booked himself onto the course and went along to find out more about investing in real estate.

The fitness trainer had heard about Airbnb and the possibility of renting out his furnished flat for short stays, but never delved into it.

As he explains it: "I didn't really know what it entailed and how to get into it."

It was when Samuel spoke about serviced accommodation that he decided to try it on his flat and gave notice to his tenant of his intention to take back the property.

"The tenant didn't really use it that much. I thought let me just implement that strategy onto that one first and then I'll get into the next one. As soon as I put it on, I started getting bookings. It was a good start for me. It gave me a lot of confidence just to continue doing it."

Even in the low season, the returns are way beyond what he was previously receiving.

"In a bad month it'll probably bring in about £1,500. In a good month it can bring in up to £2,200. The profit I'd say is over £1,000 [per month] and now it's just on an interest only mortgage. I don't really pay out much for it."

He adds: "I learned so much from turning that property into an Airbnb. Until you take action, you're not going to learn exactly what you need to learn."

Six weeks later Danny secured a rent-to-rent agreement, having abandoned the idea of trying to acquire more buy-to-lets.

“I couldn't see myself having to save up the money, get a deposit, buy another property, rent it out, wait for it to go up in value and make money from it. It put me off.

“When I came to the crash course and heard how I could do different things to make money in property that reignited my fire to get back into it.”

Subsequently, he enrolled on the academy to gain an in-depth knowledge of the various strategies available to him to increase his profits. It was while making calls to find a deal, as students are encouraged to do, that he realised he already knew people involved in property.

One of his many contacts was an estate agent who had been trying to get into the entrepreneurial side of the industry but lacked the time to do it. So, Danny brought him on board.

“We met up for a coffee and talked about what we wanted to do and where we wanted to take the business. Then he started showing me a few of the properties that he had. That's when I came across the main house that I have.”

The seven-bedroom house, in the Stechford area of Birmingham, became his first rent-to-serviced accommodation deal. The landlord receives £2,300 a month and then it is rented out again on a nightly basis for a higher amount, the difference being his margin.

After a slow start while learning about how to price it, Danny and his partner were soon seeing the benefits.

“In November we turned over about £8,500; in December about £6,000 and in January about £5,000. February was fully booked again and March (2024).”

The property is rented out through Airbnb and booking.com and they also promote it to firms needing accommodation for their employees while away on jobs.

“We've got a lot of reoccurring customers as well who have stayed there in the past. I always try to reach out to every guest, find out about the company and who's in charge of the accommodation and just keep in contact with them basically.”

Just that one deal generates a monthly profit of £4,000 to £5,000, depending on the time of year, says Danny.

The deposit was £2,400 and they also had to pay £2,300 for the first month's rent, plus just under £7,000 to stage the property. The maintenance is their responsibility too, but they quickly recovered what they spent on it.

Straight away a three-month booking worth £12,000 came in from a company in Spain.

“I'd just taken over the property, so we had five days to get it ready. We were working with the team till about three in the morning and it was being booked out the next day.”

Not content to stop there, he teamed up with another joint venture partner, taking on more apartments in the Hockley district of Birmingham. They now have five flats in a large complex, bringing the total number of rent-to serviced accommodation properties in his portfolio to ten.

The monthly turnover ranges from £28,000 to £37,000, of which £6,000 to £7,000 is profit.

As well as his rent-to-rents, Danny owns his home, plus another one in Walsall which is tenanted. He regrets selling the property he had in 2022 because he believes it would have worked as an SA.

The entrepreneur agrees with his mentor that it is important to consider who is under your nose. He thinks of this as low hanging fruit – looking within your own circle of friends, family members and business contacts for opportunities.

A lot of business comes to him through his gym. He still does some coaching but spends more time nowadays on his property dealings.

“I’ll still do some one-on-one coaching in the gym just because it gets me out there talking to people.”

He also does some online coaching but changed the format so that it does not occupy as much of his time as it used to.

Along with his own rentals, the businessman manages properties owned by other investors. Whilst he prefers the SA model over buy-to-let because it is much more profitable, there are logistical challenges.

Systemisation is essential to maximise the revenue when guests are coming in and out. Using the right software and automated messages lessens his workload. Having good cleaners is also paramount, as is having a system for handling the laundry, he points out.

“We have a company that does all our laundry and our bedlinen. So, we have a system where we bring all the dirty laundry and the bedding to our main hub once a week. The company fetches that and leaves all the new bedding and linen. Then that gets dispatched to all the other properties.”

If he had just one apartment, the cleaners would be able to deal with the laundry, but with so many properties under his control there had to be a centralised operation in place.

“We had to change it because obviously on one weekend we could have 40 beds that are being slept in that need to be changed by 3pm.”

He also employs a virtual assistant. “She used to work for me for the fitness, but she's come along and started to get involved with this as well.”

One of his business partners is responsible for quality control, making sure they compete with the best Airbnbs in what some regard as a saturated market in Birmingham.

Danny is not intimidated by that – quite the opposite. “Birmingham is a tough cookie to crack but if it's saturated that means there's a lot of business there.”

Visitors come to the city from all over the country, as well as Europe and beyond.

“What you don't realise is there is a lot of tourism in Birmingham. We had one guest from California. It's just because we live there, we don't expect it.”

Originally from Walsall, Danny is now keen to tackle a buy, refurbish, refinance project as he has contacts who could help him on the renovation side.

“Now I know exactly what kind of property I want and where I want it and how I'm going to run it. It's exciting.”

The academy not only educated Danny it enriched him in other ways. “I speak to at least somebody every day from the academy. I probably speak to them more than I speak to my own friends.

“It's been a great experience. I've had mentorship before, but it's been nothing like with the academy. With all the education, the Mastermind (Monday night mentoring calls via Zoom with Samuel Leeds), the meals and the Inner Circle meetings there's just so much.”

He also saw it evolve with more features being added, such as apps and the Property Investors Mediation Service, PIMS.

Danny feels he now has a long-term goal and a clear direction of how to grow and prosper.

“With property I’m in control of my own destiny,” he concludes.

Samuel is confident his former student will continue to thrive. He says: “It’s exciting times for Danny and he’s a great entrepreneur. He looked at what he already owned and who he knew and thought he would try serviced accommodation on his buy-to-let property. Now he has multiple properties and is making far more money. It’s a lesson to other investors that they could revolutionise their existing property business just by being a bit more creative.”

DANNY’S TIPS

“If you’re looking to get into business, get educated in what you want to do. Don’t overthink and have a lot of belief.

“You can study Samuel’s YouTube videos as much as you want but until you’re actually doing the thing that you want to do, you’re not going to learn.”

“You’ve got to be willing to take a risk and have some kind of skin in the game. Having skin in the game is like coming to the academy and investing in yourself. That way you’re going to really put it into action.”

“When you’re trying to secure a rent-to-rent deal and approaching agents/landlords, speak to as many people as you can and refine your skills. Be confident in yourself.”

“Everybody started from somewhere. Nobody is going to expect you to know everything straight away. But people do need to see your passion for property and that you’re serious about it.”

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 24 – GEORGE TORR AND LUKE HOWITT

Best friends earn £15,000 in one month from rent-to-serviced accommodation and selling investment deals

It was watching Winners on a Wednesday and listening to Samuel Leeds students describing their successes which persuaded George Torr to go into property and sign up to the academy. His best friend Luke Howitt joined him soon afterwards and before they knew it they were full-time entrepreneurs.

The pair make their living from a portfolio of rental properties and selling deals to investors. In one month alone they clocked up a total profit of £15,000, followed by £9,000 the next month.

Success came quickly to George and Luke, despite starting out with very little money to invest. George launched their company in January 2023 and by September they had both quit their jobs to concentrate on expanding their operation.

Before working in real estate, Luke had run a commercial interiors business for 10 years with his brother and father who stepped away from it after a while.

Luke fell into the family business but did not enjoy it. “I did okay from it, and learned a lot which obviously you can take into this business. It was always what I thought I would do. Then when I was doing it, it just wasn't for me.’

In a nutshell, Luke had no passion for it. “I started at 19 with my own business. It's intense, especially when you've got your brother and your dad involved.”

It was George who got him into the business of bricks and mortar. He came along to one of Samuel Leeds' crash courses and it 'blew his mind.'

“I'd never realised how quickly and easily you could get into property. I always thought people in property had loads of money and it wasn't accessible for me. Then I came to the £1 crash course and Samuel laid out all the different strategies – no-money-in deals and low money deals.”

Fired up by what he had heard, George contacted Luke and told him they had to get involved in property. Luke remembers: “He came to me just at a time when I had my own personal struggles. He just said you need a change. I thought he doesn't do anything without looking into it.”

George 'bit the bullet' and joined the academy. As he was about to go on the rent-to-serviced accommodation course, he spoke to Luke who then accompanied him. They knew each other well, having played football together as boys and attended the same schools. After completing the training, they decided to form a business partnership.

A month later, in February 2023, the two men collected the keys to their first serviced accommodation property and went live with it in March that year. A tutor on the academy alerted them to the opportunity.

“That's our best property still – the first one,” says Luke.

The returns on the three-bedroom penthouse in Manchester are extremely healthy.

“We're paying the landlord £2,700 a month. So, we can fetch a pretty high nightly rate. We're making around £1,200 a month off it,” explains George.

A one-night booking worth £1,200 boosted their takings and afterwards they took on another high-end property in Manchester. The businessmen recognised that although the rent is high it enables them to charge a premium nightly rate.

“The first two were high-end properties but instantly we saw the return,” Luke points out.

In a saturated market, where there is a lot of demand but equally a lot of supply, they need to make sure their accommodation stands out from the competition.

Before agreeing to any rent-to-serviced accommodation deal the partners study the market to find out what the average nightly rate is in the area for similar accommodation. This includes researching properties being advertised on sites like Airbnb and booking.com

“If our property can look better than theirs, we know we could achieve that nightly rate,” says George.

A rule of thumb for them is that even if the property is half empty in a month, but they are not losing money – or it is only giving them a small profit – then it is still a good deal.

“If we're charging a high nightly rate, anything after 50 per cent, when you're breaking even, is pure profit. However, we're averaging around 80 to 85 per cent occupancy most months,” adds George.

They normally require a minimum booking of four nights during the week for the penthouse – when the rate is lower – to avoid partygoers who might reserve it for one night on a Friday and damage it. Their target market is contractors, people in between house moves and anyone else visiting the city who needs a temporary base.

“On the weekends we want to make the most out of people coming up for a night who are going to splash out and hit those high nightly rates,” Luke says.

“We’re happy to take one-night stays when you are hitting £1,200 for a night. We understand the risk that comes with it, but we have the systems and an amazing cleaning team in place that will take care of that.

“But most of the time when you’re paying those high nightly rates you tend to get people who are quite respectful, whereas we can’t be charging £500 a night for a Tuesday in the middle of January or December. So, you have to lower the nightly rate.”

Their rent-to-rent portfolio now consists of seven properties which generate a revenue of £22,000 to £25,000 per month.

“We’re very disappointed if we don’t hit a profit of £5,000, even in the low season. Just coming into the high season now I think we’ll be close to the £7,000 mark,” anticipates Luke.

The pals split their earnings, supplementing their income with sourcing deals.

From the start their aim was to give up their jobs which created a sense of urgency. “We couldn’t just dip our toe in,” says Luke. “We had to be trying to scale as quickly as we could.

“We came on the ACPP (Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme) in February. Since then, we’ve started to take on management properties.

We've got another two that we're about to take on over the next few weeks."

Their plan originally was to grow their rent-to-rent business to a level where they could save money and plough it into buy, refurbish, refinance projects.

However, in a one-to-one with Samuel at the ACPP he advised them against saving their way to becoming rich because it would take them too long.

So, Luke and George modified their strategy by securing two investors who are prepared to put £80,000 to £90,000 between them into a BRR venture.

George says: "We'll buy the property. We'll add value to it, refinance it and pull most of our money out, if not all depending on the deal. Then we'll rent it out as serviced accommodation or as an HMO."

On the deal selling front they are selling two a month on average which nets them £6,000 to £7,000 in commissions.

"Our best month in profit was £15,000 which was in March," says Luke. "Then we followed that up in April with a profit of £9,000. Some months it can vary because you're lining deals up that take a bit of time to complete. But the rent-to-rents in the background are guaranteeing us £5,000 which we know we can live off.

"Everything we make on top of that is where we start to build our wealth."

For Luke, the biggest challenges in the beginning were identifying properties and dealing with landlords.

"Trying to find properties isn't easy. That's why people pay for deals. We've had a lot of people approach us and say I want to get into deal sourcing, with no training, and asking for advice.

“We'll happily give people tips, but you need the training to know how to secure that deal, how to speak to an agent and then how you adapt that to speak to a landlord – two completely different things.”

Convincing landlords to buy into the rent-to-rent model is the ‘hardest part’ as some of them have had bad experiences with untrained operators.

George had this problem one day. “I was on the phone with a landlord and pitched a company let style agreement. Straight away [it was] just a blunt ‘no, had five others, done this before and awful experience, not interested.’

Without training it is easy to lose money if you negotiate a rent-to-rent agreement and have not done your due diligence properly, George warns.

“If you get your figures wrong, you're going to be losing money every month and that's the biggest nightmare possible. There's a lot more to it than getting a property and just sticking it on online travel agents. It doesn't work like that. You need to do research. You need to make sure it's staged properly.

“Also, you get people who think you can go to IKEA, get nice ornaments, and put them in any apartment or any property in any location and you're just going to get bookings,” says Luke. “They're not realising that you still need to keep an eye on your nightly rate. You need to make little adjustments to increase your chance on the algorithm.”

Having the right type of tenancy agreement in place is essential too. It must be a company let or the arrangement would be viewed as subletting which is not allowed.

Another pitfall is not giving yourself a way out if the property proves to be unprofitable. With no break clause in the contract, the renter cannot back out of a long-term lease, leaving that person potentially out of pocket.

Luke makes the point that this is why the training is so valuable. “I'd done a flip before. I thought I knew the basics, but it's not that simple. There's so

much that can trip you up if you don't know or at least reach out to people who do know."

George and Luke ask for a deposit so that if a guest causes any damage, they can recover the cost of fixing it, using Stripe, an online payment system. The customer will only be charged if a repair is necessary.

The year-long academy programme gave them a solid grounding to then build a successful real estate business. It took time to work out what to charge for each of their properties, and they benefited from being able to ask for advice.

"I don't think I've ever asked a question in a chat or to a mentor where I felt stupid asking the question.

"Without that we probably wouldn't have made it to the second property because we had teething problems with the first one. It's high rent and there were definitely times where we thought, what have we done here?" admits Luke, adding:

"But in the end, it's worked out to be a brilliant property for us and it's helped us to quit our jobs and have our own business, financially free.

"We love what we do, so we work a lot. Even if we're out on the golf course the phones are there all the time. The network's been massive for us."

For George his life was 'flipped on its head' "The freedom having this sort of business gives you is unbelievable. In my last job I was up at 5.30am and not home till six o'clock at night.

"By the time you've had dinner you want to go to bed because you've got to get up early, whereas now I wake up on my own terms, work for the rest of day and then when I'm done enjoy my free time."

Watching Winners on a Wednesday episodes going back six years persuaded George to invest in the academy, and then he and Luke were featured which was one of their early goals.

As George puts it: "Samuel keeps having students, week after week, showing their success. I think that speaks for itself. I thought if they're doing it, why can't I do it? With the knowledge, [it's] kind of a no-brainer."

Samuel says their story shows what can be achieved even with limited funds: "George and Luke didn't have a big pot of money to start with and they've quickly achieved success through two strategies. They've done very well and I'm proud of them both."

GEORGE AND LUKE'S TIPS

"The fastest way to replace an average salary through property with no experience is to get educated as quickly as possible. Then you know the strategies you can go into with no money or low money."

"Co-sourcing is a great way to start. You get trained in how to find a deal. Then you move it on to a deal sourcer who sells it to an investor, and you split the fee."



CHAPTER 25 - SUKHPAL SOHAL

Pharmacist conquers his social anxiety to boldly buy a 200-year-old derelict house in Scotland

Pharmacist Sukhpal Sohal went from struggling with social anxiety and being held back by limiting beliefs to investing in a derelict 200-year-old house in Scotland.

In between the two extremes he became a member of the academy which gave him the knowledge and confidence to overcome his nervousness and make bold decisions.

From having negative perceptions about himself, Sukhpal was filled with positivity and rewrote his story, meeting his business partner along the way.

Sukhpal, who qualified in 2016 as a locum pharmacist, used to drive hundreds of miles a day from his home in the Midlands to different pharmacies, putting in 15-hour shifts. His job took him as far afield as Cornwall and Devon, and although it was a demanding routine, he was well paid.

“I’m grateful for that but I realised that I was trading my time for money,” says Sukhpal looking back. “Also, if I wanted to settle down with someone, I knew I wouldn’t be able to give that time to them. So, I had to think of another solution.”

Both his father and uncle prospered through property. He saw they had a passive income from it and yet he was nervous to do his ‘own thing.’

“I didn’t feel I was capable at the time, or smart enough. That was holding me back from making that change.”

The academy gave him the expertise to make the transition from working long days to earning a living with minimal effort through investing in real estate.

Sukhpal could have turned to his family for advice but chose instead to get trained. With his background as a pharmacist, education was important to him.

“I needed a framework. I joined the academy knowing I was going to get that framework,” he explains.

On the programme he learnt about strategies like buy, refurbish, refinance, rent and serviced accommodation, benefiting from the environment as well.

“I’ve met some amazing people in this academy, and I know when I’m surrounded by winners I take off.”

One of the people he met was Damon Wiseman who signed up to the academy in his early twenties and went on to become a successful property investor.

They got on immediately and teamed up as business partners, buying the house in Scotland for £145,000.

“It was in such a bad condition. The roof needed changing. There was no insulation inside. The walls were falling apart. No one wanted to touch it with a barge pole,” Sukhpal remembers.

Despite that, they recognised the potential to convert it into serviced accommodation. Sukhpal used his contacts to raise £200,000 for the renovation of the property.

After the work was completed, a chartered surveyor valued the house at £500,000.

Sukhpal was delighted but the best part of the deal was still to come. As the garden is long, Sukhpal and Damon split the title and are building a three-bedroom house on the land. Builders, who came to give them a quote for the initial project, gave them the idea after seeing the plot.

It lies next to a main road, and so the two men found an architect and secured planning permission for the house. The end value of the two houses is predicted to be £950,000 to £1m.

With the redevelopment expected to cost £590,000 in total, it will leave a profit of about £400,000, although they have no plans to sell up. Both houses will be rented out as serviced accommodation. They also intend to obtain a new mortgage which will release capital to pay back their investors.

“We'll take out 70 per cent loan to value and we'll have £40,000 each as well – and we've got two high cash flowing SAs with a combined turnover of about £150,000 at least,” says Sukhpal.

After paying the mortgage and other bills, the margin would be about £2,500 to £3,000 a month per house which equates to financial freedom from just one deal.

The two entrepreneurs are confident they can achieve their target as the area attracts many visitors.

“It's in a very high occupancy area. People go on holiday there. It has nice beaches, and the biggest national park in the UK is there, Galloway Forest. It's just a beautiful place,” adds Sukhpal.

He only saw the rundown house once before purchasing it. The property is five hours away from where he lives, so it was a leap of faith. However, Damon was on site, and he trusts him.

“He bought a house very close to the project so he could look after it. I took that into consideration. We didn't have an agreement as such, which could have been very risky, and obviously for other people I would recommend it. But we very quickly built up a rapport.”

They share the workload and delegate tasks between each other. Damon is recompensed for any manual work which needs doing.

There were some major challenges. It took 14 months to finish the house refurbishment which was much longer than the original schedule.

The main reason for that, says Sukhpal, was that although the property is not listed, it is in a conservation area. This meant having to obtain planning consent for ‘absolutely everything’ from the windows to the roof tiles, and even the slabs in the garden.

He was surprised at the level of detail required. “We learned the hard way. It delayed the projects because we had to keep putting in planning permissions.”

It also took time to find reliable builders and then the pair discovered they needed a holiday let licence in Scotland. The requirement came into effect just after the build was completed.

Usually, it took three months to apply for a licence and get it passed. Determined to find a solution, Sukhpal got hold of the telephone numbers

of the planners and spoke to them. As a result, he managed to expedite the process to a month and a half.

He also had to sort out an issue with a skirting board being too high, which would have left a gap when the carpet was fitted. Sukhpal took it all in his stride.

“I'm not scared of facing the problems and doing things. If you did this project and you have beliefs about yourself that you're not smart enough or not capable of solving these kinds of problems, there's no way you can do it.”

Being able to communicate well and handle pressure are key, he believes.

Going into property gave Sukhpal a new lease of life. He now works only two days a week as a prescribing pharmacist in a GP surgery.

“I don't locum now because I don't want to trade my time for money. I've got a good cash flow coming in. So, I'm financially free.”

He is also a changed man from when he started out on his entrepreneurial career. “It was a big journey. There were difficult times where I used to be very anxious and nervous as a person.”

Even though people would look at him and think he had ‘everything together,’ inside he was suffering.

Now he is a confident investor and is set on tackling more ambitious schemes following on from the success of his first joint venture with Damon.

The property, which they did up, is the most prominent house in the village, and drew admiring looks from the residents. This led to people asking them for help with their projects.

One concerns a house about 30 minutes' drive away from their other one and an hour and a half from Glasgow and Edinburgh. The property has an estimated value of £2m and they hope to work with the owner on turning it into a wedding venue or a hotel.

Sukhpal is constantly looking for new opportunities, even on holiday. In an Airbnb in Costa Rica, he met a family who turned out to be one of the country's biggest property developers. This led to them having meetings to explore a potential collaboration.

"They're building something like a Hilton hotel, and things like that, so I'm open to anything. Although I'm not necessarily going to commit to the idea, it's nice to know that you've got the options," says Sukhpal who is aiming to add another two houses to his portfolio in the coming months.

His other investments include a small buy-to-let in Birmingham which he purchased in 2022 when he was 'short on confidence.'

"It was a very safe investment. I bought it for £255,000, with a car parking space which is worth £20,000. It's now worth £300,000, so not a lot of capital appreciation really, but it's cash flowing £1,800 a month."

Around £1,500 of that is profit as he fixed his mortgage at £350 per month for five years before interest rates shot up.

Nowadays he is not scared of taking risks. Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), of which he is a practitioner, improved his wellbeing. Put simply, it is a method which can change the way people think and behave to make them more positive.

The property training gave him more knowledge and access to a network of like-minded investors.

"Being a part of this academy was such a blessing for me and getting to know Samuel Leeds personally. He's such a lovely person. What he's doing

for the academy, giving back and helping people be successful, is really nice.”

Samuel says being in a community where everyone is positive and wants to win is powerful. “It's been such a pleasure seeing not just Sukhpal's property success, but also his personal development – and the fact that he's now coaching other people and being such an inspiration and a joy. His project in Scotland is the perfect ‘before and after’ Instagram and I will be sharing it on my page.”

SUKHPAL'S TIPS

“Work on your mindset and don't be held back by limiting beliefs.”

“If you pay a builder a day rate, they've got no incentive to come back the week after. Get a schedule of works and price it up.”

“Success breeds success. Share your ideas.”

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 26 – STEVEN RICH

University ‘dropout’ takes on two hotels without using any of his own money

Invest in yourself. Become investable. Get good at finding deals. Then the money will come. That is Samuel Leeds’ advice to his students.

Steven Rich followed it to the letter and is now wealthy not just in name. He used his savings from working during his year out after leaving school to join the academy. Armed with knowledge and a new set of skills, investors began to see him as someone they could trust, especially when he found a ‘banging’ deal.

Then the money did indeed come rolling in. Steven used his contacts to buy a hotel at the age of only 21. Soon afterwards he took on another one in a joint venture and before he knew it the two hotels were turning over more than £33,000 a month.

It was quite a coup considering the academy student did not use any of his own funds and was still only a year into his journey to becoming a fully-fledged property entrepreneur.

Steven, who learned while he earned, also sources deals, picking up thousands of pounds in fees from selling high-yield investment opportunities.

Before working in the industry, Steven was studying mechanical engineering when he decided to leave because the course was not meeting his expectations.

Steven had drifted into university after doing well at school. “I wasn't necessarily that book-smart at school, but I managed to come out with three A's at A-level. I didn't really know what to do. I thought the next step is uni, as most people do, and so I took a year out.”

He worked in recruitment part-time, completed an internship and was a bartender for a while before taking up his studies.

His ambition was to convert classic cars to electric to make them sustainable for the future and thought university would teach him to do that – only to find out when he got there that the three-year course was more theory-based than practical.

“I was sitting down at a desk for 10 hours a day. It wasn't exactly what I had in mind. Maybe an apprenticeship would have been better for me,” says Steven in hindsight.

Acutely aware of how much he was spending as a student – the fees on their own amounted to over £9,000 a year – he began scouting around for other ways of making a living.

Midway through his second year he launched his own clothing brand and started looking into property investing after hearing that was a good way to become wealthy. At that point, he came across Samuel Leeds online and went along to his £1 crash course.

“That blew my mind. I didn't realise that it could be so lucrative, and you could start at a young age. It's very motivational as well, showing that you don't have to save up for 20 years to buy a property.”

Seizing the initiative, Steven paid £12,000 to enrol on the academy in July 2023. He proved to be not only a fast learner but also a fearless businessman.

Right from the start, the young trainee was determined to find ‘an amazing deal.’ So, he trawled Rightmove for the cheapest properties with the most bedrooms. His logic was that he could do well with a lot of rentable rooms if he bought at the right price.

After viewing multiple properties, Steven finally found a 22-bed hotel near Grimsby which fitted his criteria. It was miles from his base south of London, ‘just below the M25,’ but he went to see it anyway. In a bold move, he then bid for it at auction without having the money to buy it.

It was ‘scary,’ he admits, but he persuaded the auctioneers to allow him to purchase the hotel within 90 days, rather than the usual 56 days, to give him time to secure the funding.

“I'd done the course about auctions and made sure I was prepared. I talked to a load of people who'd done it before and then managed to make it happen.”

Steven was confident that he could raise the finance. “I knew I'd be able to find it somewhere because the market valuation was so different compared to the purchase price and it just came along after I believed in myself that I'd be able to get it done.”

Exploring all avenues, he discovered that one of his parents had worked many years ago with a man who had gone on to become hugely wealthy. By investing his salary into real estate over three decades, he had amassed a £50m portfolio and was now worth £10m.

To get some tips on raising finance, Steven booked a call with Samuel Leeds' mother Sue Gray, who acts as a mentor to students. When he spoke to her, he told her about the hotel deal and the connection with the multi-millionaire. Straight away, she advised him to put together an investor pack and run it past his contact.

"That's what I did. I asked him to look over my investor pack pitching for finance. I got halfway through it in front of him and he just stopped me and went, 'Well what if I loan you the money at this interest rate.'

"I went that's perfect. You solved my problem. I didn't even ask him for the finance, and it came across."

He adds: "The week after I agreed to purchase it, I got a RICS valuer (a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) out. They valued it at £510,000. I showed him the valuation and he said, 'I can loan against that.'

Steven's investor put in £367,000 which covered the purchase price of £320,000, plus the auction/legal fees, stamp duty and about £10,000 for improvements to the property.

Again, Steven was certain that he would be able to repay him after drawing up an exit strategy and seeing others on the academy raising finance.

"I knew that the price I was buying it at was about 70 per cent of the actual value of the property. I knew that if I hold it for six to 12 months, I can refinance it, pull all my money out and pay the investor back.

"I was comfortable with that idea of I can just hold it, refinance, pay them back and I own it for free, buying below market value."

His plan would also release capital through refinancing the hotel to its new value which could be reinvested in another project.

Thanks to his training, Steven had become 'investable' and the deal he clinched was attractive to an investor.

"I've seen so many people do it in the past, raising finance to buy a property and paying the investor back. It's a win-win because you get the finance you need for the property; the investor gets their interest every month. So, in every way everyone's winning out of it."

In addition to buying the building, he took over the hotel business that came with it. Within a year Steven had massively scaled up the operation.

"If we look at April 2023 the revenue was £8,500 a month which was okay. It was owned outright. There wasn't a mortgage [on it], so there wasn't that extra overhead. Then in April 2024 the revenue was £18,500."

The previous owner was a GP and Steven believes it was difficult for him to focus on the hotel and his surgery at the same time.

"When one runs itself, it's usually fine to just let that carry on. It didn't make a loss and over the 12 months of the year he made money on it."

Steven is the sole director and shareholder of his company, and the hotel is in his name.

He employs a manager to look after it day-to-day, while he provides backend, administrative support. He also has other staff, including cleaners and a handyman.

"I'm fortunate to have found that team because without that team the business could have died as soon as I took it on. It really helps building that team around you and making sure it's a win-win for everyone."

"Obviously I've taken that huge risk. I get the big upside and big downside potentially, so I'm at risk. But I'm providing work for these people at a great wage. I'm really happy to be able to offer that."

Separately to that enterprise, Steven went into business with two fellow academy members, sourcing and negotiating investment opportunities which they sold through their company, The Alliance.

They collected their first finder's fee four months after Steven came on to the academy. Then they, and another joint venture partner, took control of an aparthotel in Liverpool called the Seven Suites. Steven describes it as a seven-unit block of flats. They took it on a commercial lease – in much the same way that Premier Inn leases its hotel buildings without owning them.

The aparthotel is listed on sites such as Airbnb and booking.com because they spend millions of pounds on marketing, and it would be 'silly not to use them,' he explains.

"That's been going since late November and turns over upwards of £15,000 a month."

It was popular over Christmas and into the New Year, but then the number of bookings fell.

"It was a tough couple of months, and we just about broke even. We had to put in a little bit of money but now we've learned how to market it. We've learned how to pitch it to people online, getting professional photos, optimising our listings like Samuel teaches. Just doing that helped."

The deal came about after a fellow student identified a rent-to-rent opportunity on one of the courses and it became apparent the whole block was available. Steven then entered into a joint venture agreement, and they obtained investor funding.

Steven feels he was treated differently sometimes because of his age. One person thought he was working alongside his 'dad' and was surprised when informed by Steven that it was just him in the business.

Someone else asked him: 'So how do you own this?' to which Steven responded: "I just work in the industry."

On another occasion he felt belittled when he and his business partners, who are both older than him, attended a meeting. They met a man who shook hands with his partners, but then looked at him and said, 'Oh, young energy.'

Steven is still trying to work out whether that is good or bad. Nevertheless, the remark left him feeling 'hit down.'

"You've just got to learn to fight back against it and prove why you are good enough to be in that meeting."

Steven benefited from being in the environment of the academy, finding it, like the crash course, highly motivating, and encouraging of younger people.

"Now I'm around five or six people who are anywhere from 19 to 25 and are all involved in this. Traditionally you wouldn't be able to do that. You'd be told you're too young; you haven't got the money; all these things pulling you down rather than building you up."

He frequently seeks advice from others with more experience than him when encountering a problem.

As for the training itself, he describes it is 'unbeatable' because there are so many courses and strategies to learn about.

"I knew that you could do buy-to-lets and HMOs, but I didn't understand other strategies like lease options and auction purchases below market value. These are powerful strategies which Samuel teaches."

Steven says he is enjoying being a property entrepreneur so much more than university, particularly as he now has a clear vision of what he wants to do in life.

“I just want to build my own business and show other people that it's possible to get into property at a young age if you're driven and work hard.”

Samuel is glowing in his assessment of his former student: “Steven achieved so much in a short space of time at such a young age. He is a natural entrepreneur who thinks out of the box. I wanted to create an environment in the property space whereby I could level the playing field and give everybody an opportunity to be able to get into the industry. Steven seized that chance and I'm so pleased to see him succeeding.”

STEVEN'S TIPS

“If you make a bad purchase or a bad decision, it's not a failure. It's a first area to improve.”

“Everything is about belief. If you don't think you'll do it, it's never possible.”

“Get the right training and get around the right people.”



CHAPTER 27 – NINA BARTLETT AND RICH HARRIS

Rent-to-rent portfolio and jobs with Samuel Leeds give couple a new lease of life

Publican Rich Harris and his partner Nina Bartlett, who was also in the trade for many years, thought they had to work harder to achieve their dream of becoming financially free through property.

Their plan was to take on as many pubs as possible to increase their earnings and then save £20,000 at a time to put down as a deposit on a house or a flat that they could rent out. And for a while their strategy worked. They acquired three buy-to-lets in North Dorset which they still run and found themselves with an equal amount of pubs.

Rich describes them both as ‘very driven.’ At one stage they had two pubs which were two miles apart from one another.

“We ran our pubs in competition with each other. So, I ran one, Nina ran the other. Nina won more awards. I made more money,” Rich jokes.

When they took on another pub, it was hard work. They employed 75 staff, but there were always problems to contend with, such as absences due to sickness.

“If that’s your chef, then you have to learn to fill his boots,” says Rich.

They were often having to put in extra shifts unexpectedly and were effectively getting paid less than their employees. There were compensations. It gave them an amazing lifestyle because they were their own bosses.

That delicate equation between working hard to earn money and enjoying what spare time Rich and Nina did have was disturbed when they had children.

“For us that was a game changer. Rich was constantly working 100-hour weeks. I was raising our girls – there’s a year between our children – and it was no life. It was just becoming this cycle of going round and round. I was watching the bank balance and thinking oh wow, we’ve saved £500 this month, but that’s a long way off £20,000 to get the next buy-to-let.”

What had once seemed like a good formula to build wealth, no longer added up. The couple wanted more out of life. With that in mind, they came to the crash course to find out how they could ratchet up their earnings from real estate.

It was a petrifying experience for them, despite the welcoming environment.

“What I found was everyone was happy and helpful. It was a community – all those things we’d really been missing. We’d been very isolated. We sat in the same seats in the entire training and did not move. We were so scared,” recalls Nina.

This anxiety was fuelled when they attended another course and were separated after everyone in the room was told to swap seats for the day. Gradually, however, they began to talk to more people and relaxed.

Rich remembers being sceptical at first about the training. “When we came to the crash course, I said to Nina, Samuel’s not going to be there. When he walked on, I was like okay he is here. And he stayed all day.

“Then we came back for two days of training, and I was like, he’s definitely not going to be here this time, and then he was there for the full two days. That’s when the trust was built. After that we joined the academy.”

The course which they completed was about renting a property from a landlord and then reletting it as serviced accommodation. Nina was confident she could make a go of it if they could master the art of persuading landlords to let them rent out their properties.

Even so, she was taken aback when Rich suddenly announced at the course that he intended to enrol on the academy. She was worried they could not afford it, but Rich realised they had to invest in their education.

Once on the year-long training programme, Nina and Rich made full use of the mentoring service. They booked a call with Samuel Leeds’ stepfather Tim Gray, who is an accountant, to get advice on choosing a strategy.

He interrogated them about their plans and pointed out that whilst what they had achieved was impressive, they were not making enough money. Their three buy-to-lets, for example, bring in around £1,000 a month.

Following that meeting, Rich and Nina decided to go down the route of providing serviced accommodation which is usually more lucrative than a standard let. They also immediately gave up two of the three pubs they were running to focus on becoming professional property entrepreneurs.

Nina looks after the serviced accommodation side of their business. They control seven properties, renting them from the owners through their

company, G & L Estates. Their profit comes from renting out the furnished accommodation for a higher amount, with the agreement of the landlord. Guests are charged a premium nightly rate as they are staying there on a short-term basis.

At their peak, the pair had 10 rent-to-rents but handed back three after a year because they were not receiving enough bookings out of season. Three are in the centre of Bournemouth and they also offer serviced accommodation in Southampton.

The income varies, depending on the time of year. In summer, the Bournemouth properties bring in about £1,800 each, but only break even in the winter.

“Southampton makes about £900 a month throughout the year, whereas Bournemouth’s really high in summer and really low in winter. It’s the same outcome,” explains Rich.

Averaged out, the profit comes to around £1,000 a month per property which is more than three times as much as one of their buy-to-lets generates. By using the rent-to-serviced accommodation method they also avoid having to shell out a huge deposit to buy a rental property.

In a slight departure from their usual strategy, the entrepreneurs took control of a house share in Eastleigh which is about five miles from Southampton. They rent the whole house and then make their money by letting each room to different tenants.

Nina found the property online. It was advertised as a fully refurbished, three-bedroom house, but when she enquired about it the landlord let slip that it had been an HMO before (house in multiple occupation).

He was open to it being used for that purpose again and they secured another rent-to-rent deal with him.

Rich says it is so easy to manage because they do not have to go there. “We vetted all the tenants heavily. It took us over a month to get it fully tenanted because I was so picky on who went in there.”

He adds: “It’s such a good property. It’s got sensors in the rooms for the heating controls. Normal double rooms are £600, and we’ve got an en suite room at the top which is £700. It makes about £750 a month profit.”

They agreed to pay the landlord a guaranteed, monthly rent of £1,800, which was £300 over the asking price, to reflect the fact it had been a house share.

Nina and Rich were entering new territory as this was their first HMO but made sure they were thoroughly prepared to make a success of it.

“For me it was get the books back out, put the course back online from the academy. It’s just a dictionary that is sat there for you to use,” says Nina.

There was a deposit of £1,800 to pay as the landlord had done up the property and it came furnished. Their only other expense was buying duvets for the beds.

Rich hopes to do more business with the landlord as he also owns property in London which they could take over in future.

They branched out again when they pitched a lease option agreement to another landlord of a property in Portsmouth. They were in a country park on their day off when Rich took a call from the owner. On the spur of the moment, they went to see it, even though there was no parking.

Rich says he was a tired landlord who just ‘wanted out’ because he was fed up with tenants. “I said, ‘How many properties do you have? He said, ‘I’ve got 10,’ so we pitched a lease option to him. Hopefully we will buy one a year off him for the next ten years.

“It’s tax efficient for him but it works for us. If we run them as serviced accommodation, then we could just save the deposits really quickly.”

Nina loves her new line of work, hosting guests. As she puts it: “Serviced accommodation for me has been a great way of expressing myself from a desk.”

Rich is also enjoying his role. The pub, which they still have, is now fully staffed, which allows him to tackle other projects while that runs in the background.

One opportunity, which came their way, was not to be missed. Samuel Leeds invited Rich and Nina to become the live-in managers of Willingham House, in Willingham near Cambridge. Samuel has a lease option on the hotel and messaged them separately, proposing that they run it for him. With the pub systemised, freeing up Rich’s time, they decided to ‘go for it.’

They will take a percentage of the profits from the 24-suite apartment which comes with conference rooms for functions. In 2024, the company’s Apprentice-style Eviction competition took place there.

Rich and Nina are looking at other possibilities too, such as turning the country mansion into a wedding venue. Their ultimate target is to achieve an annual revenue of more than £1m from the hotel.

Nina believes that is achievable, with so many potential uses for the hotel. “As soon as we walked in, I said to Rich this is incredible where this could go. The sky’s the limit. £1m is not unachievable. You can do that in a small pub.”

Their personal earnings already look healthy. Eighty per cent of their income comes from their property portfolio which covers their bills, including a private education for their two young daughters.

They acknowledge the pivotal role that the academy played in giving them the skills and knowledge to improve their lot. Nina sums up the experience

in one word, ‘life-changing.’ They both found it addictive being amongst people from all walks of life, young and old.

If they did not know the answer to something, they had access to mentors, including 24/7 mentoring if the enquiry was urgent. Nina tested it and was impressed by the service.

“The responses are incredible. It’s so detailed. We just would not be where we are without that support.”

Students are also encouraged to join in weekly Mastermind sessions on Zoom to share their achievements and swap tips.

Nina concludes: “There are always going to be challenges. No part of any journey is going to be easy. If you think you’re just going to get a manual and that manual is going to do the work for you, and then say the strategies don’t work, that’s your own fault. You clearly haven’t given it a good go or prioritised.

“Every evening we’ve been on the phone. Every evening our children go to bed, and we hit the office.”

Their parents helped them with looking after the children when they needed to attend a course which took them away for the night.

Their head mentor Samuel turned to them when he needed help, asking them to view a property for him in the luxury resort of Sandbanks in Dorset as he was unavailable. He also took them out for dinner after they attended his Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme at his house.

Nina still pinches herself: “Each step of the way it’s been, ‘Is this really happening?’ We’re excelling at this and going in the right direction because of the support we’ve had.”

Samuel is pleased to bring his former students on board with him in business. He says: “I’m really excited to be partnering with Rich and Nina

on Willingham House. I'm too busy to manage it myself. I could see with their skills and background in hospitality, as well as scaling back with their pubs, that it made perfect sense.

"We've got lots of bookings already from our academy members. We will also be running our Accelerated Coaching Performance Programme from there and all our conferences. It will be a mini academy hub."

RICH AND NINA'S TIPS

"You don't have to work harder, just smarter, to build wealth."

"You never know who you're talking to. You could meet a landlord and think you're looking at one flat and you might be looking at 20."

"Take action and get out of your comfort zones. If you stick in them, you're never going to get anywhere."

"Give it a chance. Don't just write things off and don't become bitter."



CHAPTER 28 – KATIE JOHNSON

Former NHS employee helps her local hospital by providing accommodation for new staff

Hospitals need to hire doctors and nurses all the time to replace staff who leave or retire. But if those new employees cannot find a place to live, it can delay the filling of vacancies and affect patient care.

Katie Johnson identified the problem when working in the NHS and now rents out rooms to healthcare workers, providing somewhere for them to stay temporarily while they get settled.

Her portfolio of seven serviced accommodation properties in Gloucestershire turn over £20,000 to £22,000 a month, of which about £5,000 is profit. It covers her bills with some left over to reinvest in her business.

Katie rents the houses and then relets each of the rooms for a higher amount with the permission of the owners.

She learnt how to become a property entrepreneur after joining the academy in the spring of 2024. Katie needed no introduction to Samuel Leeds, having worked with him ten years before that.

Then aged 23, Samuel gave a talk about his deal sourcing at a networking event in Hull. He also spoke about Training Kings, an organisation which he was running, bringing together Christians like him who were in business. Afterwards a man in the audience approached him and said he knew a Christian who was 'entrepreneurial.' That person turned out to be Katie.

Samuel shared his vision for the group, which was still being developed, when they met later. Katie says he was a good salesman and sold her on the idea of getting involved. Attracted by his passion, energy and ambition, she agreed to head up the London branch of Training Kings in Chelsea.

Of the 17 branches around the country, it became by far the most successful, with businessmen and women from churches all over the capital flocking to the meetings. In time, Training Kings' members began asking Samuel to teach them about property and that led to the birth of his training company.

Katie had her own grand vision of wanting to get into property and help her grandmother with her charitable work in Kenya. But then Katie hit a wall of depression and lost touch with Samuel for many years.

Her 'nan' also passed away and Katie suffered a miscarriage which added to her distress. Recognising she needed to find a focus, her thoughts turned back to investing in real estate to make a living.

At the time Katie was employed in HR (human resources) for the health service, having to meet tight deadlines to hire staff. It was challenging work because if a doctor or a nurse was unable to find short-term accommodation, they could not start their job. This in turn would affect her department's recruitment targets.

Seeing an opportunity to help the health service fill its vacancies quickly, while also solving a problem for her colleagues, she contacted Samuel again.

“By then I was following him on social media and seeing all the amazing things he was doing and how he had scaled from Training Kings to this huge property empire he was building for himself,” recalls Katie.

She was also impressed by how many successful students he had and messaged him.

“I said I admired his journey so much and he was super inspiring.”

Katie also asked him how they could help each other to which he responded that he was about to hold one of his popular £1 crash courses on property investing.

“I came along to the crash course immediately and signed up for the rent-to-rent training.

It was a no brainer. I could see that I was going to learn a lot because even the crash course was incredibly inspiring.

“You leave that crash course [feeling] like you can take on the world.”

From then on, the aspiring entrepreneur set aside two hours a day to ‘bang out the courses.’ Her hard work soon paid off, she says.

“Within six months I had four rent-to-rents and within eight months I'd left my job and was full time. I'm still full time in property now.”

Katie adds: “That rent-to-rent training gave me the blueprint which was what I needed. Step by step, I followed what Samuel said to a tee. That's how I got my success.”

It would have been a natural step for her to join the academy at that point. However, first she wanted to do some more work on systemising her business before learning more strategies.

Katie finally took 'that leap of faith' and enrolled on the academy. She found everyone was friendly and supportive, and enjoyed meeting lots of people, while also taking advantage of a 'buzzy' WhatsApp group to build contacts.

It was the perfect launchpad for her property business, Kasa Solutions. She runs it single-handedly, although in the early days she roped in her family and friends to help her.

Describing her business model and how it works, she says: "My properties are HMOs. I bridge HMOs with SAs, so I manage rooms and I prioritise healthcare workers. It is part of my mission. I moved from London back to my hometown of Gloucester to begin this and forged a partnership with the local hospital.

"My first group that I housed for two to three months were international nurses who had been recruited from the hospital. It was really lovely to have a community already within the houses. Everyone gets along. They just arrived together. There was a coach that came and dropped people off.

"One of the buildings that I manage is an old student accommodation block. Nurses came and there were suitcases everywhere. It was just incredible to see that I'd made this happen."

Katie is pleased that she has 'found the middle ground' between the NHS career she had and her passion for property. It also gives her satisfaction to know that she is fulfilling a vital need in the sector for accommodation.

She herself struggled when looking for a new place to live during the pandemic. "Being an NHS worker during Covid was really hard. I was working evenings. I was working weekends and estate agents were not

prioritising or giving us any help. Everybody else was swanning around on furlough. NHS staff were like other key workers working their socks off."

Eventually, she viewed a flat and put an offer on it. It was taking a long time to go through. So, she traced the landlords and told them she worked for the NHS.

"I asked if they could help me, trying to pull some heartstrings and I actually did get the flat."

When Katie moved from London to Gloucester, she attempted to negotiate an agreement whereby she would rent her old flat out as serviced accommodation. In return, she would pay the landlord a guaranteed, monthly rent. He was not open to the idea at that stage. But a year later he contacted her, knowing that she was doing well in property, and offered her the chance to take on another of his properties in London to house NHS staff.

The entrepreneur secured one of her first deals through OpenRent, an online platform used by landlords to advertise rooms for rent in their properties.

"You can message them and most times it's going directly to them," Katie explains.

In her experience, a property which looks rundown is more likely to be advertised by a landlord than an agent. The owner is also often open to 'anything.'

One landlord met her at his property and 'liked her vibe.' She asked if she could make a video and made a joke about all the walls being in magnolia. Her light-hearted approach landed her the deal.

"I know there was somebody else who tried to go for that property on a rent-to-rent basis, who offered more, and he said no to them and yes to me."

The lesson from that, she believes, is to be yourself. “I like to have fun.”

She rents out the rooms separately with his permission and hopes to agree a deal to purchase it at a later date.

“I did have to put in a new kitchen, and paint and furnish it. But now that I've done the lease option training, I'm looking at presenting a new offer to him because it's his only property in Gloucester. I think he owns about 200 in Birmingham.”

When the lease on the Gloucester property expires, Katie will try to negotiate a fixed price to buy it in future. She rents out each room for around £500 a month and pays the landlord a fixed rent of £1,300 per month. She waited for the rent money to come in before installing the new kitchen.

“I didn't put the kitchen in straight away. I dressed up what was there.”

After a mentoring call with Samuel Leeds, Katie drew up an ambitious business plan to take control of more properties using the rent-to-rent strategy.

“My plan at the moment is to scale what I'm doing in acquiring accommodation suitable for key workers, [that is] accommodation near hospitals. I'd love to go nationwide but I'm one person and can't do that myself. So, I'm working through my business model to see how we can package it perhaps as franchise opportunities.”

She is also keen to embark on some buy, refurbish, refinance projects. “It's all very well making this cash flow. However, in terms of wealth building capital appreciation is the name of the game – so ownership, finding BRR deals to grow my pot.”

Before becoming an academy member, she bought a house in Aberdare in the Welsh valleys and did it up. One option would have been to remortgage

the house to its new value. This would have given her funds to reinvest. She could also have rented it out as serviced accommodation. Instead, she sold it because she was unaware of the possibilities at the time.

“We bought that for £70,000 and spent around £15,000 doing it up. Unfortunately, it was during Brexit and the market was a bit unsteady, so it took a long time to sell. In hindsight I probably should have kept the property and just remortgaged it.”

What excites her the most now is knowing that she is armed with all the tools to meet a landlord or an agent, hear about a deal and then suggest a ‘solution.’ That confidence comes from having a thorough grounding in the various investment methods which can be used to make money.

She also had unlimited access to mentors during her training and felt fully supported. The mentoring was phenomenal, says Katie. On one occasion it was Samuel himself on the other end of the line.

“It was a shock because I was given a different name when I booked the mentoring call and then it was Samuel calling.”

From time to time, if other mentors are unavailable, he steps in to help in his capacity as head mentor. Katie was considering taking on a BRR scheme in Newcastle because house prices are cheaper there and wanted his opinion on it. He advised her to keep to her existing patch where she had connections.

The style of the training, mixing practical tasks with the theory, tested her. At the same time, it allowed her to ‘learn on the job.’

“At the training you’re thrown in the deep end. We’re straight on the phones to agents, booking in viewings, running numbers, speaking to landlords. It is thrilling and a little bit nerve-wracking, but we’re all doing it together. It’s a great environment.”

Katie also benefited from being given a blueprint on the rent-to-rent course which she could follow. It kept her 'focused and on track.' Students can learn from each other's mistakes too which is crucial in enabling them to progress and prosper.

One feather in Katie's cap during her time on the academy was being invited to speak about her real estate journey to an audience of 500 people. One of her reasons for wanting to be successful in business was to continue her late grandmother's charity work in Africa.

For 20 years her 'nan' supported orphans in Kenya by encouraging families in the UK to sponsor a child. Her goal was to build an orphanage there. That did not happen, but she has children's homes named after her in the country, says Katie.

She accompanied her to Kenya, delivering clothes for the youngsters and taking them out on trips they had never been on before, including safaris. Now she is 'fired up' to go out there again and 'give back.'

Changing her career made Katie much happier. Her friends ask her why she is always smiling. Her answer is simple. "I've got to put that down to the opportunity that I took to do Samuel's training and believe in myself that I could be a success."

Equally important is the fact that she feels in control of her life.

"I wake up in the morning and I'm full of gratitude. I can decide how my day is going to go. That is a luxury, and it has given me a massive sense of peace. I prayed to be living a life like this."

Samuel cannot speak highly enough of his former student. He says: "I don't think Katie has any idea of how much value and inspiration she brings to the property investment community. She's not only making good money but she's also living her purpose. I'm really proud of her.

KATIE'S TIPS

“You can't grow if you're not constantly being uncomfortable.”

“To be a successful property entrepreneur you need to get the education. I started by watching Samuel's YouTube videos and booking a crash course.”

“Having goals and a business plan is important, as well as being held to account.”

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 29 – NICOLE KLUTSE

Investment banker gives up her Canary Wharf job to forge a rent-to-rent business

At the age of 26, Nicole Klutse gave up her £65,000 a year job as an investment banker amid the skyscrapers of London's Canary Wharf to earn a living from property.

“It sounds crazy, but I just believed in myself,” says Nicole who by then had already joined the academy to gain a thorough understanding of the industry.

Her motivation for leaving her banking career was to have more time for herself and to live a life which accorded with her religious views.

“My mantra in life is to create a life I love and in investment banking for several reasons I wasn't enjoying it. It was making me sad. I was depressed. I wasn't living in purpose.

“But now that I've come to do this I feel like I'm living out a life of purpose in so many ways because I have more time. I'm able to read more and be in my word, like in the Bible. I feel it's a better way for me.”

Nicole only had about £5,000 in savings when she started out, having previously invested in a friend's rent-to-rent deal. Her friend was Stephen Asamoah-Duah, the drummer in The Compozers, a quartet of British-Ghanaian instrumentalists.

Stephen put in the work, while she provided the finance to set up the property for the rental market, she explains.

"That's when I got the first exposure to rent-to-rent. He was taking us through it, and I was like this thing works."

It was then that she came across Samuel Leeds and attended his free rent-to-rent crash course in 2022.

"The crash course blew my mind. Samuel took us from front to back about how to do rent-to-rent. It was so informative," remembers Nicole.

She was sat at the front and participated in a role play involving asking questions on the telephone which she found useful. Afterwards she enrolled on the academy programme.

"Even before the training came around, I thought I'm signing up for the academy because I'd watched so many people on Winners on a Wednesday and then from there I haven't look back."

With limited funds at her disposal, Nicole knew it would take too long to save up the deposit for an investment house, particularly in Croydon where she lives. So, she chose to look for a property which she could rent and then rent out at a higher rate, with the owner's consent, to make a profit.

It took her several months to find one because she was still working when she started her training and lacked the time to make lots of calls. But then, six weeks after quitting her job, the young entrepreneur got her breakthrough.

She secured her first serviced accommodation unit in Liverpool after seeing the property advertised for rent on Gumtree.

Looking back, she admits it was a gamble sacrificing her high wage to go into business, although she felt it was the right decision for her.

“Even though it was risky to leave, and I'm not saying that everyone should do it like this, I was fortunate enough that I still do live at home.”

Having that safety net of a roof over her head and suddenly having plenty of time gave her the flexibility to go to a viewing at short notice. And that made the difference.

When she initially contacted the landlord of the Liverpool property, which she now controls, he invited her to see it the next day. It was a weekday, and she immediately took up his offer. This turned out to be crucial because someone else was also pitching a rent-to-rent deal to him and could have got in first had Nicole not accepted the invitation straight away.

It was her first time in the city, but she managed to establish a rapport with the owner, so that even when the competitor later viewed the property, she was already ‘locked in’ with the landlord.

“He just said, ‘Yes you can take it Nicole.’ But had I been at work that wouldn't have happened.”

By this stage the businesswoman had honed her pitch and learnt what to say and not say, as well as when and when not to ring a landlord.

In the time she left Liverpool to return home, the accommodation was up and running and someone had booked to stay there.

“It was a mad turnaround but then that's because of the academy. I was able to reach out to people when I was there and say does anyone know a cleaner, a handyman, a photographer.

“The beauty of the academy is the network as well, because I would not have been able to do that by myself, or I could have but maybe when I’d come back down to London something would have gone wrong, with no one even to help me.”

Since coming back from Liverpool, Nicole has not visited the property once. She now has four other rent-to-serviced accommodation units which are in London. Before taking on her fifth one they were making a profit of around £5,000 a month.

She was driving to her Winners on a Wednesday interview with Samuel when she received a direct booking for a four-bed property which a landlord had just handed over to her.

The month-long booking, worth £8,300, was from a company needing somewhere for six of its employees to stay while they were working in the area. After paying the landlord just under £4,000 for the rent, she was expecting to make a profit of about £3,000 just from that one reservation.

Nicole scours sites like SpareRoom and OpenRent, as well as estate agents' websites, for leads. In the early days, she was only searching for apartments to rent. Now she believes any type of property has the potential to work as a rent-to-rent.

“If you can negotiate favourable terms, any property will work. It doesn't matter if it's a house, a flat, a two-bed or a one-bed, just as long as the numbers make sense.”

Nicole prefers to speak to the owners herself, rather than dealing with agents. She worries that they will not convey her service properly when contacting the landlord.

“They'll say something like, there's a girl who wants to do a rent-to-rent. I'm like no, that's not how you have to say it. I'm going to pitch and I'm going to show you my portfolio thus far which is different.”

While many students struggle at first to persuade a landlord to trust them with their property, Nicole has excelled at that aspect. Neither of the first two landlords she negotiated with asked her for references.

Her confidence is high, having learnt 'from the best' in exercises during her live training and read many personal development books.

"If you believe that you can, you can. If you believe that you can't, you can't."

This can-do philosophy influences her negotiations. "I'm always thinking this is going to happen. This booking is going to come through. I'm going to take on this four-bed and I know it's going to get booked and it's going to be a very good booking.

"That's always my belief, so when I speak to a landlord I'm offering something great, and I am a great person to work with."

Nicole impressed her head mentor Samuel when he tested her skills with a role play during her interview with him for his weekly YouTube series featuring some of his successful students.

He played the part of a landlord while she posed as the investor trying to obtain a viewing. She explained that her company took on properties in south London on a long-term basis, renting them to firms when their contractors needed somewhere to stay locally.

Her business also provided temporary accommodation for doctors and nurses coming from overseas to work at King's College Hospital in London, and was looking for more properties, she said.

Finally, Nicole offered to meet the landlord to discuss her service in more depth and to point out the benefits for him after fending off his attempts to 'shoot her down.'

A property owner may ask her to outline her proposal in an email, but she tries to secure the viewing there and then to avoid losing the opportunity. In the role play her response was: "So, what would I need to write in an email that I couldn't tell you over the phone?

"I think what would be best is if we meet in person. Then we can discuss it and if you don't want to go ahead that's fine. But I think once we meet and I explain the offering and how much better it is in comparison to renting to a normal tenant, I don't think you would disagree with it. Let me know if that's good for you and we can make that happen."

When she agrees to a company let, one of the advantages for the landlord is that she takes over the maintenance of the house or apartment. She can also quickly be kicked out, should she fail to pay the rent.

Although her patter is well rehearsed, Nicole avoids wasting time researching a property in case it is a 'no.'

"For me it's a case of get there, build the rapport because at the end of the day even if that one's not suitable he might have others."

Her goal is to get in front of people and speak to them. Only then will she carry out her due diligence to assess whether the property works for her.

"I sell on the concept and then go away and make an offer. But now that I'm quite familiar with my patch I'm quite confident on the numbers. So, when I see a four-bed I'll be like okay this is what I can offer, and this is what I think I can get.

"It's good if you have a patch. Then you can be even more confident when you go there and make that offer because you know what works and what doesn't work."

These days the former banker regards herself as being in such a better 'head space' after finding her own formula for happiness.

“My belief in myself has skyrocketed in terms of what I can achieve. If I say I want to do something, I would be able to achieve it.”

Her life has changed too in the way that she can ‘buy back time.’ “I wake up, go for my walk, read my book, write in my gratitude journal, read my Bible and then start my day which is so much different compared to the rush, rush, rush before. I’m much happier now.”

Samuel encourages his students to adopt a positive mindset. He says: “People will believe in you if you believe in yourself. Nicole invested in herself and believed in herself. The way she handled the role play was beautiful. I can see why she’s had success getting deals. She’s inspiring and all the mentoring with us paid off.”

NICOLE’S TIPS

“If you want to get into property, go to the crash course. It’s sensational. You’ll realise why Samuel Leeds is the best in the game.”

“Back yourself and take action. The process works. You can do it, but you need to have the belief. Then everything else will fall into place.”

“Don’t bog yourself down with the details before you go to a viewing.”

Samuel Leeds



CHAPTER 30 – GAVIN FERNANDES AND KHUSH KOCHHAR

University graduates shun traditional job route to set up a property management company

When Gavin Fernandes and Khush Kochhar left university, their parents wanted them to get a job and settle down. They had other ideas. Employment was not for them. Their goal was to become rich through their own efforts rather than relying on someone else for their future prosperity.

Khush had long been interested in property. His mother and father own seven properties and he thought it was a good way of making a passive income. But they bought at the ‘perfect’ time in 1999 and 2000 when houses were cheap relative to salaries. Now prices had shot up and Khush could see no way of ever getting his foot on the property ladder.

So, he and Gavin, who have degrees in aerospace engineering and business management respectively, began exploring other methods of making

money. The two young men researched various types of investment including cryptocurrency and NFTs (non-fungible tokens).

Then they discovered Samuel Leeds, just as they were about to purchase their first NFT. That plan was shelved when they came to the crash course. Khush remembers how the moment they walked in they sensed the energy in the room.

“Everyone stood up and started cheering and clapping. We thought okay there's a good reason.”

Afterwards they pooled their savings to join the academy and started networking with other investors.

Khush's parents thought he was 'crazy' wanting to become a property entrepreneur, warning him against going down what to them was a riskier route than seeking employment.

“They thought you can't do this. You're 23, people don't know you. You don't know how property works. You don't know how to build and do this and that. Now their minds have changed because they've seen how much money we're making,” says Khush.

They were both prepared to take a risk to enjoy the freedom of being their own bosses. They set up a company, called GK Alpha Property Management, which specialises in offering investors a hands-off service while also maximising their profits.

Khush and Gavin's expertise lies in furnishing and decorating properties to a high standard, and then renting them out as serviced accommodation which attracts premium rates.

With a portfolio of properties in London, Reading and Windsor, they also source investment deals and now employ two staff after going into business in 2022.

One apartment which they manage is in a block of flats in Canary Wharf, London. The landlord owned all of them but was struggling to know what to do with this particular apartment.

“It wasn't renting out and it wasn't selling, so we decided let's turn it into an SA. We told him how to do it. He let us manage it. Now that one apartment is making more than the other apartments in the block turn over per month,” explains Khush.

The business partners pride themselves on maintaining an excellent relationship with their customers, with the emphasis on providing a personal service.

“We treat their property with respect, and we stage their property how we would stage ours. We make sure it's top standard,” Gavin says, adding that they receive good reviews because their clients are aware of the work they put in.

London, which draws in masses of visitors, is a great place for renting out furnished accommodation, he points out. The disadvantage is that there is a 90-day restriction operating in Greater London. It means that properties in the area can only be let out on a short-term basis for a maximum of 90 days per calendar year.

Gavin and Khush target medium-term bookings to avoid being trapped by this rule. Their definition of a short let is one that stretches from a day to a week. They class anything over a week as a medium length booking. Any period longer than a month is a long-term stay in their view.

Airbnb regulates the rule, blocking anyone from accepting bookings for serviced accommodation once the 90-day limit has been exceeded. Khush says this does not happen in their experience on sites like booking.com and other online travel agencies.

“We've had a booking for 14 days and it hasn't come up in the 90-day rule,” says Khush but admits it is a grey area with differing opinions on the definition of a short let.

There are other downsides. Most flats in England are leasehold and the freeholder may have imposed a restriction prohibiting the use of the property for serviced accommodation.

It can be a deal breaker, says Gavin. “We've viewed at least 10 to 12 and about five to six of them had restrictions. It is annoying as they were all perfectly good deals. The landlord was interested but because of the restrictions couldn't do it.”

In addition to properties which they manage, they have a rent-to-rent in Windsor. They pay a fixed, monthly rent to the owner and then relet it for a higher amount, keeping the profit.

“In the last two months during the peak summer season (of 2024) we've been making £1,600 to £1,900,” Gavin says.

Their portfolio also includes two properties in Reading producing a profit of about £800 to £1,000 during the low season after deducting the rent and other expenses, including employing cleaners. These margins, however, are a fraction of what they earn from the management side of their operation.

Khush reveals: “Even on our Paddington property alone we're making £800 a month just through management.”

Whilst there can be challenges in renting out a flat as an SA, there are a lot of benefits to simply managing accommodation as opposed to taking it on as a rent-to-rent. Importantly, they avoid having to use their own funds to generate cash flow.

“Every month is just straight money coming into our account. But also, we're managing the property for our landlord and promising them more

rent than they would get from a single let. So, it's a win-win for both of us," says Gavin.

This differs from the rent-to-rent strategy where the investor has the hassle of paying all the bills. The individual also runs the risk of losing money if the house or flat is unoccupied because the rent to the landlord still has to be paid. There are other costs too, such as staging the place and having to pay rent in advance before it can be rented out.

"It's not that we have zero responsibility. We have responsibility on the management side but to the landlord we don't have any ties," Khush says.

The appeal for the owner is that they might have a property renting out for £2,000 per month, but with their mortgage increasing due to interest rate rises their profit disappears. They can either accept the situation or hand it over to property managers like Khush and Gavin, who through their training know how to set up and run an SA.

They charge 12 to 20 per cent of the revenue, depending on the location of the rental and the time of year.

"With London we like to take 20 per cent but we like to work with our clients. So, in the winter season we take 12 per cent and then in the summer we take 15 per cent," Khush clarifies.

He makes the point that although they take a sizeable slice of the income, because of their efforts, their customers are still coming away with a profit of £1,500/£2,000 a month.

Their clients benefit from Khush and Gavin knowing how to increase the rent and achieve high occupancy levels, as well as having access to their power team. This includes a maintenance team and cleaners who ensure everything is 'crisp and clean.' They also employ two virtual assistants to help them run the management business.

Alongside this support, they use channel management software to co-ordinate bookings across multiple platforms which frees up their time even more.

“It was effectively like a full-time job, but we want to replace a full-time job not by doing it ourselves but by systemising things so we can focus on bigger tasks,” says Gavin.

Khush and Gavin sometimes sell serviced accommodation deals to investors and then look after the properties which they found.

Increasingly, their clients are bespoke investors prepared to pay £3,000 upfront to secure an SA which the two partners sourced and negotiated a price on. One month they sold three such opportunities.

Khush says: “I think our power team is what people really want because they don't know where to get the best cleaners and they don't know how to do Uplisting (channel management software). “They don't know how to link it to PriceLabs (a pricing tool) and how to manage it. Managing PriceLabs is an algorithm on its own and that's something that we learned. We took time to learn it. Our knowledge is what they're paying for.”

Every three months they review the performance of their properties. If any are under-performing they will examine why and focus on solving the problem. Ultimately either side can part ways, but they work hard to bring in more guests.

They are also now moving into commercial sourcing, searching for development land between two and a half and five acres on the edge of towns.

Khush believes there is demand from leisure operators for sites in towns like Basingstoke in Hampshire and Surrey. “We're trying to look for someone either with consent or without consent who doesn't know what to do with the land. They've just got land and they want to sell it.”

Their role includes finding out how much the land is worth and then passing on that information to the investor and charging a commission.

They have a list of more than 200 investors looking out for their SA deals, keeping them separate from customers desiring commercial ventures.

Khush describes their experience on the academy as amazing. “We could speak to the mentors any time we had a problem. They supplied us with so much.”

As a ‘maths-orientated’ person, he also enjoyed learning how deals stack up. Part of his training involved being shown step by step how to calculate the return on investment – starting with the price of the house, the deposit and the cost of any refurbishment required.

Gavin was similarly impressed. Before going to the crash course, they both read books on finance and personal development which put them in the right frame of mind.

“It set us up so well for when we came to Samuel’s event. I feel he portrayed everything that was in those books to us as well. It made us believe him.”

The academy took him to a new level. “Everything I’ve learned in our property business has not been from university,” adds Gavin. “We learned about marketing and managing people but not how to set up a business.”

He concludes: “It takes a lot of time and effort but if you’ve got that time and [put in] the effort I’d highly recommend the training.”

Samuel believes Khush and Gavin are providing an essential service in today’s economy by helping people with investment properties to up their earnings. He says: “Investors will pay Gavin and Khush to find a deal and then they’ll pay them again to manage the deal. That’s a great business model. What they have achieved is inspirational. They are really making a

name for themselves offering property management specifically in serviced accommodation in London. Now they are moving into commercial sourcing. I'm excited about their future."

GAVIN AND KHUSH'S TIPS

"If you want to become a property entrepreneur, get educated, take massive action and surround yourself with like-minded people."

"We got hundreds of rejections before we secured our first SA. People often back down after their tenth or twelfth 'no' and say it doesn't work. All you need is that one yes. Keep going."

"To find a good property manager look at the properties they've taken on before. See how well they've performed. If they're getting high occupancy it's a no-brainer."

"You can ask managers for their Airbnb or booking.com link. If they say they're hitting 90 per cent occupancies you can check the availability on their calendars. Also check their reviews and testimonials."