# Cameron Academy Hits 15 Campuses and Florida's Biggest Brokerages Are Asking to Be Next

*The independent school turned down a national buyer, then ran 380 miles from Key Largo to Palm Coast and hired 18 instructors in a single year.*



A Cameron Academy of Real Estate licensing class in session in Florida, in front of a wall built from photographs of past students.

ORLANDO, FL, UNITED STATES, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Cameron Academy of Real Estate has opened its fifteenth Florida campus, and the list of brokerages, title agencies and law firms asking to be sixteenth is getting longer.

The family-owned school now teaches from Key Largo to Palm Coast, roughly 380 miles of coast and interior, and hired 18 instructors this year to staff it. It's the largest single-year expansion in the school's 23-year history, and it happened without an owner, a parent company or a buyer.

> Ten years ago I was the one calling brokerages. Now they're calling me. That's the real story of the last three years."
>
> *Michael Cameron Sidawi, Founder, Cameron Academy of Real Estate*

Michael Cameron Sidawi, a licensed Florida real estate broker who has owned and run Cameron Academy since January 2013, still enjoys teaching his own classes. "The real story of the last three years is that we stopped chasing partners and started choosing them," he said.

The timing isn't lost on anyone in Florida education. Over the past decade the state's best-known independent schools have been bought, one after another, and folded into a single national company. Cameron Academy, a family-owned Florida real estate school founded in 2003 by Linda Cameron, got the same call.

It said no, and then went and did the opposite.

"We were never interested in being acquired. We were interested in being everywhere," Sidawi said. "There's a difference between building something and selling it, and we've known which one we were doing for twenty-three years."




Students outside a Cameron Academy of Real Estate classroom location in Florida.




Cameron Academy of Real Estate has offered certification and licensing courses in Florida since 2003.

## THE SCHOOL LINDA BUILT

Linda Cameron opened Cameron Academy in Orlando in 2003. Her son, Michael Cameron Sidawi, was there from the first class and took the school over in January 2013. Twenty-three years on, it has never left the family and has never had an outside owner.

"My mother built this from nothing and I've never forgotten what that cost her," Sidawi said. "When somebody offers to buy the thing your mother started, you think about it for exactly as long as it takes to be polite."

## WHO SAID YES

The partner roster reads like a who's-who of Florida brokerage, and that isn't an accident.

RE/MAX Premier Properties in Downtown Kissimmee is led by Daisy Lopez-Cid, who served as national president of the National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals in 2018 and is a RE/MAX Hall of Fame member. RE/MAX Advance Realty in Kendall belongs to Melanie De Armas, who bought the brokerage outright in 2024, alongside broker Anthony Askowitz and better than $2 billion in career sales. RE/MAX All Keys Real Estate in Key Largo is Curtis A. Skomp, CCIM, who has moved more than a billion dollars of Keys property across three decades. RE/MAX Heritage - A Bardell Real Estate Company opened the first brokerage in Four Corners back in 1989. RE/MAX Realty Unlimited has worked Tampa Bay since 1986.

Alongside them: Market Connect Realty in Dr. Phillips, The Firm RE in Hunters Creek, Grand Living Realty in Palm Coast, Down Home Properties in Wildwood, Messina Law Group, P.A. across Trinity, Spring Hill and Palm Harbor, and Red Door Title in Waterford Lakes and South Tampa. More are onboarding now.

"Not one of these people needed us," Sidawi said. "They've got their own brands, their own numbers, their own reputations. They came to the table because they've watched what happens to a new agent who gets a license and then gets left alone, and they wanted a hand in fixing it."

WHY THE PHONE STARTED RINGING

Sidawi won't discuss the terms of a partnership, and the school treats the structure as proprietary. What the partners get is another matter.

"They meet the next generation of agents in their market first," he said. "Before the recruiters, before the franchise mixers, before anybody else knows the name. You can't buy that and you can't manufacture it. You have to be in the room the day somebody decides this is going to be their career."

The network spans the whole transaction. Brokerages, a real estate law firm and a licensed Florida title agency, which means a student learns the listing side, the legal side and the closing from the people who do each one for a living.



Michael Cameron Sidawi, founder of Cameron Academy of Real Estate.




Red Door Title, a licensed Florida title agency that hosts a Cameron Academy of Real Estate classroom.

"A classroom in a strip mall teaches you to pass a test," Sidawi said. "A room full of working agents teaches you the business."

THE PART NOBODY REPORTED

Cameron Academy has a habit of arriving early and saying nothing about it. It was the first real estate school in Florida, and among the first anywhere in the country, to move testing onto computers. In 2013 it shipped the first mobile exam-prep app for real estate students in the

United States. It was the first school in the state to livestream a class, years before the rest of the industry had to work it out overnight. And the first Spanish-language version of the Florida real estate pre-license course came out of its classrooms.

"People call it foresight. It was listening," Sidawi said. "Students told us what they needed and we built it. We never put out a press release about any of it, which honestly was a mistake."

That 2013 app is coming back. The school is rebuilding it as the spine of a wider student platform, carrying coursework, exam prep and the rest of a student's relationship with the school in one place. It's due out by the end of Q4 2026.

The program itself covers how to get a real estate license in Florida from the first classroom hour through the state exam, and students can take real estate classes in Florida in person, by livestream or online.

## THE METHOD EVERYBODY ELSE TEACHES WITH NOW

The most widely copied thing Cameron Academy ever built isn't a campus.

The school teaches in song, rhythm, repeated phrasing and story, a mnemonic system built in-house and judged on whether a rule is still there in a student's third year in the business, not on whether it lasts until Friday's exam. Enough of it has been taken into the industry's leading educational materials that instructors and providers across the field now teach from it.

The paper trail goes back further than the classroom. Earlier editions of Dearborn's "Florida Real Estate Principles, Practices and Law," one of the standard Florida texts, carry Linda Cameron as an editor.

"My mother helped edit the book a generation of this industry learned from, and we built the method a lot of them teach with," Sidawi said. "We never said a word about any of it. Twenty-three years of that. This is me finally saying it out loud."

## WHY THIS IS THE MOMENT

Florida's licensing pipeline is wide at the front and leaky at the back. The Department of Business and Professional Regulation's most recent annual report counted 94,473 inactive real estate licensees against 357,638 active ones, and the inactive column has grown every year the department has published it, from 87,378 to 91,366 to 94,473. The way in is no gentler. Of the 5,012 sales associate examinations graded in May 2025, 1,944 passed.

"Passing the exam was never the finish line. It's the least interesting thing we do," Sidawi said. "What matters is whether somebody's still in this business in three years, and that has almost nothing to do with the test."

## WHAT COMES NEXT

Sidawi says the map isn't finished and the roster is open, Florida first and out of state after that. He'll take a call from anyone who would rather fund that than buy it.

"We're not for sale. We're for scale," he said. "Two different sentences, and the difference between them is the whole company."

Sidawi has written two books for the industry, "Real Estate Agent Guide: Thriving in a Down Market" and "The Midlife Method: Life's Too Short for Later." Cameron Academy gives its licensing coursework to Florida students aged 15 to 17 free of charge, part of a longer push by Sidawi to get property education into the public school system.

## HOW THE EXPANSION ACTUALLY HAPPENED

Sidawi is direct about where the growth came from, and it isn't a strategy deck.

"We didn't grow because somebody made a clever decision in a room. We grew because of how we treat people," he said. "You teach somebody's cousin and they send their sister. You give a free seat to a woman starting over and five years later she's a broker telling everyone where she started. That's the whole growth plan. Serve people properly and the market comes to you."

## WHAT THE SCHOOL GIVES AWAY

Cameron Academy runs seats at no charge for people trying to get back into the working world after life has gone sideways, including survivors of domestic violence and people rebuilding after incarceration. It also teaches Florida students aged 15 to 17 free of charge.

"A license doesn't care where you've been. It cares whether you passed," Sidawi said. "For somebody starting over, that might be the only door in the whole economy that works like that."

## WHAT COMES BACK

Twenty-three years in, the thing Sidawi gets stopped about is never the campus count.

"Somebody finds me at an event, or walks into a class I'm teaching, and tells me what the license did to their family," he said. "A house. A business. Getting out of something they couldn't get out of before. That's fifteen campuses' worth of reason right there, and none of it fits on a map."

## ABOUT CAMERON ACADEMY OF REAL ESTATE

Cameron Academy of Real Estate runs the largest real estate campus network in Florida and has been family owned and operated since Linda Cameron founded the school in 2003. It has been licensed by the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation as a real estate school under permit ZH1002075 since June 9 of that year. Her son, Michael Cameron Sidawi, helped run the school from the start and took it over in January 2013. He holds its state permit, is a licensed Florida real estate broker (BK3198873) with an active Florida real estate instructor license (ZH1002785), and still teaches his own classes. Cameron Academy has taught more than 100,000 students across a catalog of 800-plus licensing and continuing education courses, offered in all fifty states through its partner network, and holds a 5-star average across more than 3,000 reviews on various platforms, such as Google, Yelp, and others. Its educators built the school's mnemonic teaching method of song, rhythm, phrasing and story, since adopted into the industry's leading course materials, and created the first Spanish-language version of the Florida real estate pre-license course; Linda Cameron is credited as an editor of earlier editions of Dearborn's "Florida Real Estate Principles, Practices and Law." It teaches from 15 Florida campuses spanning roughly 380 miles from Key Largo to Palm Coast, in strategic partnership with leading brokerages, real estate law firms and title agencies, and hired 18 instructors statewide this year. The school provides its coursework free of charge to Florida students aged 15 to 17, and runs no-cost seats for people re-entering the workforce, including survivors of domestic violence and people rebuilding after incarceration. Cameron Academy is a registered trademark of Cameron Academy LLC, USPTO Reg. 5610857, in continuous use since June 9, 2003. The school turned down an acquisition approach from a national education company and is not for sale. It's growing through strategic partnerships and welcomes conversations with brokerages, title agencies and law firms in new markets, in Florida and beyond. Main office: 7009 Dr. Phillips Blvd., Suite 110A, Orlando, FL 32819. Telephone (407) 251-0051. Web: cameronacademy.com

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