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## **2021 Year in Review: Maria Hopkins, Real Estate Appraiser, Maria Hopkins Associates**

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Maria Hopkins  
Maria Hopkins Associates

How has your working environment changed over the last year? The first thing that happened when the pandemic hit was to send all but one employee home to work remotely. We are all so fortunate that technology is where it is to allow us to function like that. We then had to figure out how to train new people remotely because the appraisal industry just got busier with a huge shortage of appraisers. The strict safety protocols I put in place when inspecting each property kept me from getting COVID even though I was in hundreds of properties. I have these same protocols still in place even though I'm vaccinated. I learned that I can still run circles around people half my age when I have to.

What are your predictions for your industry in 2022? There will continue to be a shortage of appraisers in 2022. Many appraisers are heading toward retirement and there still have not been enough changes to bring in enough trainees. I suggested allowing 5 trainees per licensed supervisor instead of 3. It's a reasonable number. I was training that many before licensing began. Trainees can be at all different stages of training.

What is the best advice you have received, and who was it from? The best advice I received in my career was from my mentor Steve Byrnes. Learn to say no. Don't ever cross over that ethical line and good things will always come to you. Your reputation and credibility is everything in this industry. I try and pass that advice on. I can always teach someone the profession. But you can't teach someone to be honest and ethical. They have to pass that test to stay in my company. I also had an older attorney friend Roger Leland, who sent me the book (Don't Sweat the Small Stuff). He taught me that whenever something seemed difficult that it probably meant I was tired. Sleep on it and the answer will come to you in the morning. He was right. It always does.

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