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## Title shop owner cultivates niche in Arizona market

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*Title Insurance*  
Sunday, September 30, 2007

Serving a unique niche in the Scottsdale, Ariz. Market has helped **Frank Busch III** keep his title company successful despite the down market.

Last year, the corporate attorney turned entrepreneur opened Thomas Title & Escrow, which provides full service escrow services beyond real estate settlement including financial escrows for M&A transactions, securities offerings and dispute resolutions settlements, as well as technology escrows for source code and other intellectual property.



Since then, his move to a title company has closed more than \$10 million in transactions, specifically in commercial real estate. The firm opened a residential division eight months into the venture.

"I do my best when I'm going Mach 12 with my hair on fire," the 32-year-old Busch told the *Arizona Republic* newspaper.

Busch also taps his Spanish-speaking skills and time spent studying law and working in Mexico City, to provide title and escrow services to U.S. homebuyers and developers looking to own property south of the border.

Currently, Thomas Title & Escrow is handling the title insurance and escrow work for a 220-unit residential development in San Carlos by Mesa's Sunstone Homes.

Part of the company's success, Busch said, can be attributed to the state-of-art technology his title company uses that gives clients 24/7 access to their transactions. The RamQuest powered "deal portal" counters the problems that can arise when people end up playing phone tag, missing faxes and need information at odd hours.

"My industry is drowning in paper work, and we have made a commitment as a firm, much like our developer clients, to go 'green,' " said Busch, who utilizes Commonwealth Land Title Insurance, First American Title Insurance and Lawyers Title Insurance as his underwriters.

Busch was recognized by *The Title Report* earlier this year as one of the Top 40 under 40 winners for his achievements in the title insurance industry.

"Frank Busch had a vision and took great risk to create the first title agency in Arizona with a commercial real estate focus," **Kristina Hannan** said of Busch. "Thomas Title & Escrow's primary competitors are the commercial services divisions of FATCO, Fidelity and LandAmerica. These giant companies have unlimited resources and dominate the Arizona market. To compete, Frank has structured the agency with the ability to use multiple underwriters and multiple sets of underwriting criteria, which provides an advantage when engaging in commercial real estate deals."

Busch received his Juris Doctor from the University of California, Hastings College of Law. He has been



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recognized for his pro bono service by the Maricopa County Bar Association's October Pro Bono Volunteer Lawyer Program as attorney of the month for August 2002 and as the Consumer Rights Attorney of the Year for 2003. He was also recognized as one of Arizona's top pro bono attorneys for 2004 by the Arizona Foundation for Legal Services and Education.

The following are some of his responses to how he operates his business as well as his life:

#### **Why did you become a title agent?**

I had been a corporate and banking lawyer prior to founding my title agency, and worked often with title insurance companies. I was less than satisfied with most of the experiences that I had with other title companies, and I felt like I could do a better job by paying attention to the client needs. I also believed that the title insurance industry was in need of a small yet sophisticated commercial real estate title and escrow company with an innovative strategy. So I put together a team of forward thinkers, implemented the most cutting-edge technology and started a boutique firm.

#### **What about your job gives you the most satisfaction?**

Hearing our clients rave about the professionalism and service levels provided by our staff.

#### **What is your proudest professional accomplishment?**

My greatest professional accomplishment is the creation of my own company. Although my company is relatively young, leaving the stable practice of law to follow a dream has been an incredibly fulfilling experience. I was fortunate to receive excellent education at the University of Arizona and my colleagues at Snell & Wilmer taught me how to carry myself as a professional. Along the way, I voraciously absorbed information about all aspects of business and developed a network of associates that worked in virtually every sector of industry. When the time came for me to launch a business, I was prepared with the knowledge and the contacts to make a strong run in a very competitive field.

#### **Who has been a significant mentor in your life?**

My father is a leader that I greatly admire. Although he has in recent years reached the heights of his profession as an Olympic coach for the United States Swimming Team, I watched him for many years lead with little recognition. For his family, he worked long hours and sacrificed much to put five children through parochial schools. Yet he found time to coach our sports teams, attend practices and help us with homework. He, more than anyone, taught me the value of hard work and sacrifice.

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I had many friends who swam for my dad. I have listened to his athletes speak about the profound impact that my father had not only on their swimming careers, but also on the way that they live their lives. Although he has led his charges to dozens of Olympic gold medals and collegiate national championships, I have never heard my father utter a single self-promotional word. He is recognized as one of the top members of his profession, yet he leads by example and lets his actions speak to the people around him.

**What is something unique about you that not many people know about?**

My greatest personal accomplishment is learning another language. Growing up in Cincinnati, Ohio, I never envisioned that I would one day move to Arizona and develop an interest in mastering Spanish. However, my first Spanish teacher at Salpointe Catholic H.S. in Tucson did a superb job of motivating me and I never looked back. I studied Spanish for seven years before leaving for Mexico City to live with a Mexican family for a semester to become fluent. I returned four years later as a law student to study Mexican corporate law and work with an international law firm.

**What are you listening to right now on your i-Pod/CD player/radio?**

Classical music at the office. Electronic (house) music at the gym.

**What do you do to relax?**

I work out daily and do yoga classes.

**What's the most fulfilling thing you have been involved in within your community and why?**

As a regular provider of pro bono legal services in the areas of consumer fraud and landlord-tenant rights, I advise low-income (often Spanish-speaking clients) through the Maricopa County Bar Association's Volunteer Lawyers Program. These activities have given me great satisfaction because I know that my efforts have directly affected their lives by allowing them to keep their homes, better their financial well-being and avoid severe credit missteps.

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