

Town joins forces with Miami-based Fortune International

1,000-agent Florida firm sold \$4B of real estate last year

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By [E.B. Solomont](#)

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From left: Wendy Maitland, Edgardo Defortuna and Andrew Heiberger

UPDATED, 6:05 p.m., Feb. 11: Town Residential is heading south this winter, in a new partnership with Miami-based Fortune International Group, a brokerage and development firm that sold \$4 billion worth of real estate last year.

The alliance was announced to nearly 600 Town agents who gathered Tuesday at the Paris Theatre in New York for Town's annual meeting. In addition to sharing news of the alliance with Fortune, Town executives offered a state-of-the-business update, including a recap of Town's \$2 billion in sales in 2014; an update on Town's new development projects, which they said total \$3 billion; and an unveiling of a new marketing campaign by branding guru David Lipman.

"I've never been more optimistic," CEO Andrew Heiberger told a packed theater.

As for the alliance with Fortune, which has more than 1,000 agents in Florida, the two firms will share marketing, communications and social media platforms. Each firm will have a satellite office within each other's office, and agents are being encouraged to seek dual licensing in New York and Florida.

"We have so many referrals, both coming in and going to Miami," Wendy Maitland, Town's president of sales, told *The Real Deal*. "We didn't want to dilute our New York-based focus or expertise. We wanted to strategically... connect our business with our counterpart in the Miami market."

Fortune, headed by Argentinian real estate developer Edgardo Defortuna, calls itself Miami's top luxury brokerage and claims more than 35 percent of the city's market share. Fortune executives said they hope to tap the New York market with their clients.

"We have a lot of buyers... who are interested in acquiring a property in New York," said Fernando de Nunez, vice president of Fortune's international division, who traveled to New York this week. "Without a partnership in New York, we were missing part of the business." Together, Town and Fortune can "pool resources to promote and tap different markets," he said.

"Miami to me isn't just a city," said Joseph Sitt, CEO of Thor Equities and a co-chairman of Town Residential. "It's another global gateway," The partnership, Sitt said, would "go a long way to building a globalized brand."

More than 60 percent of Fortune's business comes from its new development division, which has clients including the LeFrak Organization. Fortune's development arm also is currently working on the Ritz Carlton Residences Sunny Isles and Auberge Beach Residences and Spa in Ft. Lauderdale.

In 2014, Town said that it closed 1,148 sales and 3,775 rental transactions totaling \$2 billion in business, combined. The firm currently has 10 offices and nearly 600 agents. Town's rental portfolio includes 3,500 units, making it among the city's top leasing firms, and the company has \$3 billion in existing and upcoming new development projects, according to Shlomi Reuveni, managing director of Town New Development.

One upcoming project is 212 Fifth Avenue, a residential conversion. Last month, Madison Equities, real estate investment firm Building and Land Technology (BLT), and Thor bought 212 Fifth — considered to be the jewel of the Ring portfolio — from Gary Barnett's Extell Development for \$260 million.

On Tuesday, Heiberger said Town's current expansion would be "the first of many." What market Town taps next is unclear, though sources speculated that Los Angeles may be forthcoming. Town announced plans to expand into London last year, but the agent who was supposed to head up the London office recently jumped to Douglas Elliman. Town has said the agent's move would not affect the firm's plans.

"We're heading into our fifth year," Maitland said. "It was time to present who Town is now, and where we're going today."