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**DIGGING INTO LISTING TECH:
HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

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It comes as no surprise that buyers want to see photos, detailed property information, virtual tours, and more when looking for a house. But agents don't always deliver. Here are some strategies worth stealing.

We're digging into listing technology, a conversation that spans portals to single-listing sites, landing pages, 3-D tours, photography, videos, promotion, and more.

When it comes to listing technology, what are the biggest challenges? What types of features do consumers value most on agent websites? More importantly, what listing tech features should you emphasize on your next listing appointment to win the listing?

At this year's Awesome Females in Real Estate Conference, Annette Anthony, vice president of technology engagement for EXIT Realty, Marci James, director of industry marketing for realtor.com, and Eleni Sommerschild, the COO of Wise Agent did a powerful panel called, *What's Next in Technology for Brokerage*.

We recently reconvened this panel to explore the latest trends and best practices for listing technology. Here's everything you need to know.

WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE THE INDUSTRY FACES IN TERMS OF LISTING TECHNOLOGY?

All three tech experts agreed the industry's greatest challenge is adoption.

Leaders of brokerages and Realtor associations spend tremendous amounts of money providing technology tools that only a small percentage of agents use. An even smaller number discuss these tools during their listing appointments.

WHAT BUYERS WANT VS. WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED ON AGENT WEBSITES

James compared the "value of website features" from the [2021 NAR Home Buyer and Seller Generational Trends](#) with the "methods real estate agent used to market home." She pointed out the substantial discrepancy between what buyers want as opposed to what agents actually provide.

It comes as no surprise that buyers place photos, detailed property information, virtual tours, plus comparable and pending sales information as to their most-wanted features. What was surprising, however, is that 67 percent of buyers wanted floor plans (No. 3 on the list).

Even more surprising, interactive maps were ranked more highly than videos (51 percent versus 47 percent).

As you can see from the chart below, only 12 percent of the survey respondents were using video to market their listings, and less than 1 percent of agents use floor plans and interactive maps.

James urged the industry to make consumers their "North Star" in terms of the tools and technologies we provide. Based on the data above, James made the following recommendations:

Use professional photography rather than taking photos with your mobile device.
Include a floor plan and interactive map on every one of your listings.

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James also urged agents to continue to do virtual open houses and tours. This is based on the survey findings that 38 percent of the buyers wanted virtual tours and 35 percent wanted virtual listing showings, yet only 17 percent of agents used them.

This is especially important considering new data from realtor.com: The number of virtual tours posted on its site has dropped by 40 percent as compared to what they were seeing during the peak of the COVID-19 lockdown.



Marci James

James cited another reason for continuing to do virtual tours and open houses. Many buyers are looking for vacation and out-of-state homes. Virtual open houses also allow agents to reach out-of-area consumers as well as those who may still be locked down due to COVID-19. Be sure to include detailed neighborhood information, photos, and interactive maps of the neighborhood where the listing is located.

WHAT'S A SOLUTION FOR THE ADOPTION CHALLENGE?

Like most large franchises, EXIT Realty provides a suite of tools that help its agents convert more listings. These tools include a custom text code agents can post on their for-sale signs.

When buyers enter the code into their mobile device, they can access a single-property website for the property, tours, plat maps, resource links, as well as digital and print flyers. According to Anthony, agents loved these tools, but they were having challenges showing how they can benefit the seller.



Annette Anthony

In response to this issue, EXIT created a consumer-facing video agent that can text the sellers the night before their listing appointment. The goal of the video is to educate the seller about the benefit of using each listing tool EXIT provides.

Anthony has found peer-to-peer learning to be the most effective way to drive adoption. This led her to create a group called "EXIT engagement leaders." These agents have a strong interest in technology and love sharing what they learn with others.

The original group started three years ago with 28 leaders. Today, the group has grown to 417. Their goal is to have one engagement leader in every office.

Whenever EXIT wants to introduce a new listing tool or resource, Anthony creates a short video explaining how agents can use the tool to obtain more listings. The engagement leader is responsible for demonstrating how to use the tool for their office and for helping fellow agents to integrate the tool into their businesses.

If this type of service is unavailable in your office, any agent or broker can still start their own mastermind group with other Realtors who share a passion for using technology in their business.

WHAT ARE SOME POWERFUL LISTING TECHNOLOGY TOOLS THAT GENERATE RESULTS?

Based on her experience at Wise Agent, I asked Sommerschield to share which listing tech tools are generating the best results in today's market. Single-property websites that use the property address as the URL topped her list.



Eleni Sommerschield

An example would be 102ElmAvenueAustinTexas.com. These single property listing sites — sometimes called a landing or squeeze page — should contain the following information:

- Detailed information, photos, and videos about the property and the neighborhood.
- The floor plan and an interactive map of the area.
- Testimonials.

You will also need what Sommerschield calls a “lead magnet.” Here are three examples:

- In-depth property reports about the property. Buyers must supply their contact information to download the reports. Two excellent sources include NAR's Real Property Resource site and HomeDisclosure.com.
- Mistakes to avoid, how-to tips, and best practices. One of Wise Agent's most powerful lead magnets is a report called, “Ten Mistakes to Avoid When Selling Your Property.” “What is the value of my property?” is equally popular.
- Turn-up-the pain marketing. Sommerschield is from Chicago but currently lives in Scottsdale. She often sends pictures of the 80-degree winter temperatures when Chicago is facing subzero temperatures. An agent could use this approach to attract someone who is considering relocating or perhaps looking for a second home for the winter. It's an opportunity to market nationally, not just locally.

Annette Anthony

Aggregate all these resources together on the single-property landing page for this home. It's extremely important to avoid sending landing page visitors to another website for information.

IF YOU WERE LISTING YOUR HOME, WHAT 3 TECHNOLOGY TOOLS WOULD YOU WANT YOUR LISTING AGENT TO USE?

Here's how they responded:

James said she'd want professional photography and a floor plan. She'd also want to see her listing posted on major portals because it's important to be visible where most potential buyers are looking.

She said she's not worried about whether the listing agent gets the lead. What's important to her is that her listing is exposed to as many people as possible.

"If you're my Realtor, I want you to show me how beautiful my home is going to look," Anthony said. Given that a lot of buyers are using their phones to look at homes, she also wants to know how everything will look on mobile. "So, what are doing on mobile that's going to make my home look irresistible?"

The other factor is: How big is your social network? Anthony wants to see how her agent would engage with people who are sneaking a peek, plus how her agent plans to convert them.

Sommerschild also reinforced the importance of having fantastic, high-quality photography, in addition to the video that allows buyers to see if the home's a good fit for them.

"How are you going to promote my listing on social?" she said. "What does your social network look like? Do you do paid advertising? I'd want to know that."

What's more, she also wants to know what kind of relationships her agent might have with other people. She'd want to know: Do you have great reviews on Google or realtor.com? Who are you, and what is your social presence? Are you well-known in the neighborhood, and how will you compel people to see my property?

WHAT ARE YOUR FINAL TOP TIPS?

For their final pieces of advice for other agents, here's what they shared:

James: Listen to consumers and what they say they want. They are leading the way, and they will be the ones who will determine which direction the industry will take.

Anthony: Rate yourself. Would you hire you? If there are any places where you have deficiencies, find someone who can help you correct them. Ask for advice and encouragement because we learn best when we learn from each other.

Sommerschild: Embrace technology. Use what's out there to stand out from the competition, so you are one of the leaders that other people look to in terms of what you're doing and how you're marketing. Also, think outside the box, and challenge yourself to get out of your comfort zone.

By Bernice Ross

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