

One Trend That Will Separate Real Estate Winners and Losers

Last month, Steve Murray, president of Real Trends Inc., and Ian Morris, CEO of Market Leader, released a book focused specifically on what the real estate industry will look like over the next five years. The book, *Game Plan*, takes into account a significant amount of research as well as interviews with many of you about your current business and vision for what's ahead. Murray and Morris then offer 10 trends that they expect to see come to fruition over the next five years, with a specific "game plan" to help real estate agents, brokers, and franchises succeed.

If you'd like to see all 10 trends, click the link at the bottom of this article to get a copy. The following article explores the one trend that they consider to be the lynchpin to making it all work.

Cloud-Based Technology Platforms

The evolution towards cloud-based technology platforms, commonly known as "software-as-a-service," is the trend believed to drive performance and growth. Many of you are already implementing this. But brokers and franchises are often frustrated by attempts and costs to build an internal platform that keeps up with the needs of customers and agents.

Many of the components of these platforms already exist. The problem is, they exist separately. There are at least a dozen categories of components that are critical to a real estate agent's success, with each category having at least a dozen companies competing for attention. That's a lot to keep up with, with very little integration or talking between products. And worse still, these solutions are delivered by small, poorly capitalized companies that have neither the skills needed nor the incentives to truly integrate.

Most of these companies won't last 10 years. In fact, most will be gone in five. Why? Because in free markets, customers have a way of getting what they want, and as industries mature, customers demand seamless integration, not just "import-export" or "copy-paste."

Integration Is Key

This isn't a new phenomenon. Remember Lotus123? It was a great spreadsheet product. How about WordPerfect? Both of these products had 90%+ market share and worked great.

When Microsoft came along with Excel and Word, no one really cared all that much. Nothing's easier than what you already know how to use. But then they integrated the two, combined it with PPT and later other features into a new concept called an Office Suite, and that changed the game.

In real estate, that demand and need is even greater. Think about it. The required integration between spreadsheet and word processor is minimal. But think about all the critical components of your business and the software applications you likely already use today. We need those to integrate. We will save a ton of time, make things far easier for ourselves, if they talk to each other.

How many times do you cut and paste the same listing information into separate platforms? How much redundant work is happening? Integration is vital to making software platforms in real estate work.

Unfortunately, brokerage firms and franchises don't have the time or capital to do this work. Those individual companies don't have the capital to integrate. Nor should any of them be funding the development of systems that can be leveraged by an entire industry.

In real estate, this is playing out in two key ways. First, the sophistication and importance of software is changing the decision maker from agents to large brokerage companies and franchises. Second, more sophisticated buyers are learning the true costs associated with lack of integration, support of legacy systems, lack of security, lack of redundancy, and as a result, they are moving from single-function tools to integrated software platforms.

Demand Affordable, Innovative Solutions

You should be demanding of your partners and potential partners. You should expect complete solutions with seamless integration. You also need server redundancy and business continuity plans that assure that your priceless customer data is available to you and your agents 24/7, and that any downtime is minimal.

Look to your partners to provide you with options that make those systems affordable. They will require investment, but that investment is minor compared to the \$10 billion currently being spent by agents on thousands of marketing and technology solutions which simply won't be able to keep up with the opportunities that lie ahead.

To learn more or get a free copy of the remaining nine trends that will drive success in real estate, **[please click here](#)**.