

# HOW MOBILE TECHNOLOGY HAS CHANGED REAL ESTATE:

An Inman Select special report

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# THE METHODOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION

In 2007, two new products were launched that changed business forever: iPhones and Androids both made their big debut not even a full decade ago. Then, in 2010, the iPad launched, adding tablet devices to the mix; today, Microsoft has unveiled a laptop with a touchscreen, and smartphones have morphed from basic call-and-text communication devices to sophisticated windows into our world, powerful mini-computers that we carry without a thought in our pockets.

Of course, even as mobile devices have made finding information and getting in touch with clients easier than ever before, it's also shifted client expectations and agent and broker behavior. Real estate has never been a nine-to-five business, and in a world where sight-unseen and international purchases are becoming more common, agents and brokers are learning how to grapple with the new 24-7 rules.

Inman invited readers to complete a survey about mobile technology. We then identified seven sources based on those answers — agents and brokers who have been in the business long enough to see it change drastically and who embrace mobile technology — and conducted in-depth interviews with those sources to learn more about how they use mobile devices and platforms to better their business.

Here's what we found.

## KEY FINDINGS

- It's not your imagination: Clients expect faster responses and increased access to their real estate agents and brokers. This is especially critical when clients are still at the "lead" stage of their agent/broker relationship.
- Mobile technology puts information directly into the hands of consumers, which changes the nature of the agent's job. Instead of helping consumers find properties, agents are increasingly concerned with vetting properties that clients have found themselves.
- Some agents and brokers are able to complete entire real estate transactions on their mobile devices alone, but it isn't yet a fully seamless process. Software that doesn't translate well to mobile use and agents on the other side of the deal requiring help with newer platforms were cited as two big reasons why mobile transactions can face snags.
- The biggest mistakes real estate agents make with mobile technology? Not knowing what's out there — and being careless with their communication. Although smartphones make it easier to complete a contract on-the-go, they also contribute to typos and other mistakes that sometimes require a do-over.

*Inman identified seven mobile technology "power users" through survey data and recommendations from sources. We conducted in-depth interviews with these sources from Monday, November 16, through Thursday, November 19.*

**In 1985**, Rich Rector, the President at Realty Executives International in Scottsdale, Arizona, figured out a way to print MLS listings in his car. He'd had his license for 11 years at that point, working for his father's real estate company. "I had been selling real estate, but my real job was to recruit and do marketing for the company," he explained.

His tactics piqued the interest of a reporter at The Arizona Republic when he hooked up a Texas Instruments portable printer with his car phone. "I saw this brochure for the printer," Rector remembered, "and there was a picture in the brochure of a real estate agent taking the printer up to a pay phone. And I thought, 'That's really stupid. Maybe there's a way I can hook this printer up to my car phone and do an MLS search right there in the car.'"

He contacted TI, purchased an RS232 cable, hooked up the two devices, "and it worked," he said. "It was way ahead of its time, but it was cumbersome and somewhat impractical for the agent on the street. Still, we were able to show that searching for properties on the MLS could be done out of the office."

Today, that's no longer novel. Agents and brokers who responded to our survey consistently cited their MLS apps (along with email and portal apps) as among the most-used on their mobile devices. And nobody needs a printer or a cable to do it, either.

But even as mobile technology has made real estate easier in some ways — especially in terms of managing transactions — it's also raised consumer expectations considerably. Clients expect immediate answers to their questions, and agents must juggle more information than ever before to ensure they are well-informed and on top of their game.

Inman conducted in-depth interviews with seven agents and brokers. They shared their thoughts on where the industry is going, discussed how they manage their mobile time and gave advice for new agents and industry veterans alike.



**Rich Rector,**  
President at Realty  
Executives  
International,  
Scottsdale, Arizona

## BACKGROUND

Rich Rector got his real estate license in 1974. His father, Dale Rector, opened the first 100-percent-commission brokerage in 1965, so upon graduating from college, Rector began working for his father. In the late '80s, Rector sold the brokerage and has worked with the Realty Executives franchise ever since.

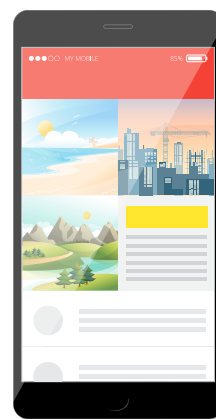
## LEAD GENERATION

"Speed of response is absolutely critical," said Rector. "People expect to receive a response quickly; if they don't, they move

on to the next person."

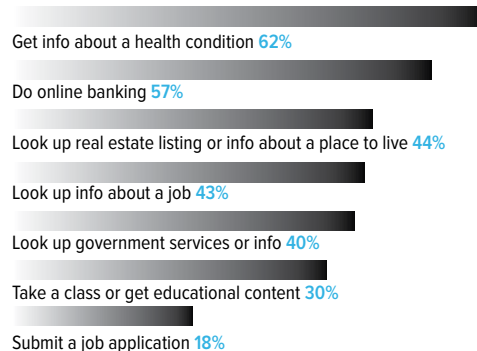
Rector said he noticed that including text-message options on his brokerage's media assets around town — "for sale" signs and the like — has increased engagement, and that using QR codes strategically has been a win for him. "Most people aren't going to get out of

their car, especially if weather is bad, and scan a QR code on a sign," he noted. "But the QR codes are still good for listings for the seller, and if you leverage them in your print media, they can be effective. If someone sees an ad in the paper, they can scan the QR code and get a video or a bunch of photos of that house imme-



## MORE THAN HALF OF SMARTPHONE OWNERS HAVE USED THEIR PHONE TO GET HEALTH INFORMATION, DO ONLINE BANKING

*Percentage of users in the last year*



Pew Research Center American Trends Panel survey, October 3-27 2014

diately rather than having to go to their computer."

## IN THE FIELD

Rector said he has brought some new equity partners into his company who've had success developing Internet and digital marketing companies. "Our develop-

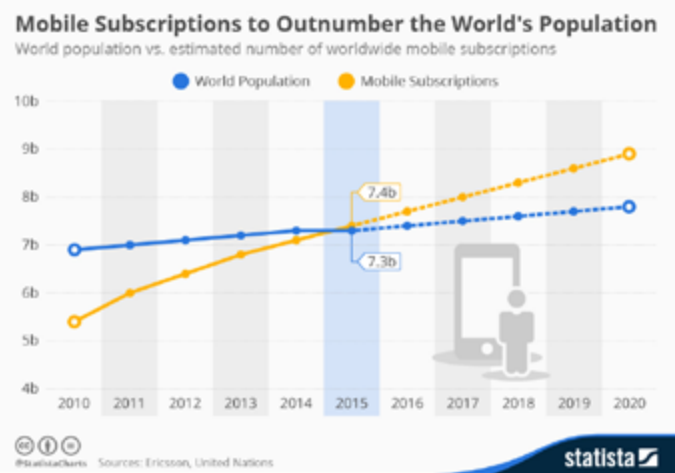
**"Speed of response is absolutely critical."**

—Rich Rector

ment team is constantly adding tools," he said. "One key thing for us was a dashboard for users — with our third-party company before, you could only access that dashboard on your desktop. We built a dashboard for users that's completely mobile-optimized."

In fact, Rector says he's mobile-opti-

mized everything possible at his brokerage. “Being able to provide that at very little cost and also provide a website — all the leads show up every day, and it all flows into each other,” he said. “It makes things a little easier as far as MLS feeds—we can use the same ones we use for our websites and not have to change vendors — and because we have our own developers, if something goes wrong, we can fix it quickly.”



## TAKING CARE WITH COMMUNICATION

Rector said he sees reluctance in today’s homebuyers and sellers to pick up the phone and talk through something. “That’s unfortunate, because in a tweet or a text message, there are limitations,” he noted. “Plus, you’ve got autocorrect, which can be a disaster.”

What are the biggest mistakes agents make? “Not responding quick enough, for one,” Rector stated. “A lot of people don’t really understand that. After that, it’s probably making sure agents know the right frequency and channel of communication for their client. Some clients don’t want texts; they’d prefer a phone call. And sometimes that’s age-related, but sometimes it’s not.”

## DRAWING BOUNDARIES WITH DEVICES

“It’s not fair for the consumer, in some ways, to think that a real estate agent is

24/7,” said Rector. “It’s a tough job, and it’s a job where experts really are needed, but you have to be able to refresh and take a break.”

Rector said that he thinks an auto-response can help some agents set those boundaries. “You can have an auto-responder to say, ‘Hey, I’m at my son’s softball game, I’ll call you in an hour,’” he said. “As long as somebody follows up with the information, then I think it’s OK.”

He also noted that setting boundaries upfront can be beneficial for agents. “I’ve seen agents just say to their clients, ‘I am not available from this time on this date to this date, and I have an assistant who will take the call,’” he said. “Once you’ve established the relationship, you can set the boundaries.”

## DOES IT HELP CONSUMERS? AGENTS?

Rector said that he thinks mobile devices make an agent’s job easier because consumers come in the door forearmed with search knowledge. “Customers tend to know what properties they want to see better than they used to,” he explained. “They’ll come to the Realtor with a list of properties they want to see, and that allows the Realtor to help them narrow it down and to think of other properties that fit their needs. It makes the beginning of the process much easier.”

## HOW CAN AGENTS USE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY TO THRIVE?

“I’m a believer in the wisdom of older Realtors,” Rector said. “Pairing somebody younger who has grown up with tech with somebody who understand the business — that kind of pairing can be really strong.”



**Helen Jaeger Roth,**  
Senior Broker –  
Consultant, Chicago  
Fine Properties,  
Chicago

## BACKGROUND

Helen Jaeger Roth started selling homes for a developer before she got licensed — at the time in Chicago (1976 or thereabouts), she didn’t need a license to sell for the developer. She sold from floor plans, and she said she learned about real estate “soup to nuts” by working with buyers to identify and shape their dream homes.

She started her own real estate company in 1986, a boutique residential brokerage firm, and in 1996, she sold it to Koenig & Strey.

## LEAD GENERATION

Roth said that word-of-mouth and referrals are how she gets most of her business; she doesn’t leverage Facebook and although she does have Zillow and Trulia profiles, she doesn’t use the portals for leads very often.

“For me, my leads are past businesspeople, where I live, being referred,” she said. She’s tried lead-generation tools, but she said that ultimately, they haven’t been worth the return on investment for her — not yet.

She does make a point, though, to get back to potential leads from her Zillow and Trulia profiles as soon as possible. “I say this to people all the time, and it’s a very old-fashioned saying, but it’s still absolutely the truth: The early bird gets the worm. If you hesitate for even a minute, you’ll kick yourself,” she said.

At open houses, Roth said that Open Home Pro is one of her favorite tools to use because it helps her gauge the level of interest of any potential leads she might find there. “If they open up the email, it gives me more power to call them,” she said.

## IN THE FIELD

Roth said that she’s been a fan of Good-

Life Team and Paperless Agent for years. “I could see all of this mobile and digital technology coming down the pipeline,” she said, “and I knew I was starting to use it.” She’s been involved with the coaching classes for about five years now.

She said the first mobile phone that she used that became more than a phone was — not surprisingly — a BlackBerry. Today, she uses her iPhone to print documents and said she is a big fan of Evernote.

“We have our own version of DocuSign — Docu Agent — so I have some transaction management,” she noted. She keeps files in Evernote on every transaction for each buyer, each seller and each transaction. “I use iBooks a lot, too, because sometimes it’s just easier to read a document on an iPad,” she said.

She also uses Canva to create visual social media posts of listings on both her laptop and her iPad; she likes the ability to superimpose text on top of photos easily and quickly that Canva offers.

## DRAWING BOUNDARIES WITH DEVICES

Roth uses her mail app and other settings on her iPhone to help her manage the flood of information. “When I’m working with clients, the lawyers and the clients and anyone who’s involved in the transaction becomes a ‘VIP’ in my phone,” she explained. “So when an email comes in, they go to the top, and I can see right away that they’re trying to reach me via email.”

She noted, too, that she thinks the “time saving” aspect of mobile technology might not save as much time as we think. “I did a little test a couple of years ago,” she said, “where I timed how long it took me to write in an email what I needed to say. The email took 20 minutes to compose, and I said the same thing on the phone in three minutes.”

And clients do think that agents should be at their beck and call, she said — but “not in a bad way. There’s a lot of anxiety involved in buying a house,” she noted.

“If you hesitate for even a minute, you’ll kick yourself.”

—Helen Jaeger Roth



**Matt Laricy,**  
Managing Partner,  
The Matt Laricy  
Group, Chicago

## BACKGROUND

Matt Laricy is a third-generation Realtor in Chicago; he got his license in 2006. “My father owns the company I work for now, and my whole lifelong dream was to get into real estate,” he said. “I used to go into the office when the MLS was still a book, when I was five or six years old and I would fill out the sheets — that was my weekend job.”

While Laricy’s father works the Southside of Chicago, Laricy himself is based downtown. “This year I’m on pace to do a little over \$100 million; I’ve doubled my sales every year for the past five,” he said.

## LEAD GENERATION

His typical client is millennial-aged — late 20s to early 30s — and Laricy said that he estimates about half his leads come from referrals and about half from his online presence. “I do have a huge online following,” he said, and estimated that about 30 percent of his clients are international. He’s the first agent to pop up on Zillow’s Chicago agent-review page, with 325 total reviews and a five-star rating.

“I remember I was one of the first people to sign up with Zillow,” he said. “I was really big on getting on it because I thought, if I’m going to San Diego for Italian food, and I’ve never been to San Diego, I’m going to go on Yelp, look at the first three places I see that are recommended and pick one. As the portals got bigger, I got bigger as well, because I was an early adapter.”

Laricy uses FiveStreet as his lead-response platform. He says the platform itself is “OK,” but what makes it successful for him is his automatic message.

“My message, I think, is spot-on,” he said. “My automatic message says, ‘This is an automated message, but I’ll get back to you as quick as possible.’ So I make that touch and then either refer to one of my

team members or work it myself as quick as I can — somebody’s got to call them within three hours.”

Laricy remembers going on family vacations with his family, “and three times a day, we’d have to go back to the room so my dad could make his calls,” he said. “Nowadays, everybody wants their answer and they want it now.”

“We get a lot of clients because it takes other people two or three days to get back to them,” he said. “To be firing an agent over that seems ludicrous — but it’s the way people are nowadays.”

## Smartphone Ownership Highest Among Young Adults, Those With High Income/Education Levels

*% of U.S. adults in each group who own a smartphone*

All adults	64%
Male	66
Female	63
18-29	85
30-49	79
50-64	54
65+	27
White, non-Hispanic	61
Black, non-Hispanic	70
Hispanic	71
HS grad or less	52
Some college	69
College+	78
Less than \$30,000/yr	50
\$30,000-\$49,999	71
\$50,000-\$74,999	72
\$75,000 or more	84
Urban	68
Suburban	66
Rural	52

Combined analysis of Pew Research Center surveys conducted December 4-7 and 18-21, 2014.

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“We have a four-touch follow-up system,” he added, “and we’re pretty good at converting online leads.”

## IN THE FIELD

Laricy said his brokerage is completely paperless. There is one printer in the office, he said, to print the documents that the state requires for filing purposes, but besides that, “we don’t really use it,” he said.

The brokerage uses DocuSign, and one of his staff members is tasked with managing the contracts with Laricy. “We have a Google Drive system that has a step-by-step process,” he said, “and clients are always kept in the loop because we change the colors for them. That can all be done on a tablet, but it’s kind of hard to do on your phone.”

Documents are also kept in the cloud, where clients have constant access to them, Laricy said. This helps save his brokerage time because a client doesn’t even have to ask for a document — they can get it themselves from the cloud.

Laricy’s a big fan of Gmail because he can arrange his communications into folders on his phone for follow-up later.

“Nowadays, everybody wants their answer and they want it now.”

—Matt Laricy

“Evernote is another one I love,” he said. “I’m a checklist guy, and I can have my checklist and share it with the group.”

He said he thinks Facebook “is key” and that for him, he’s found it to be the best social media platform for picking up new clients and keeping his profile high in Chicago. And he added that the brokerage uses Google Drive technology as much as possible.

“We have property listing sheets for my sellers in Google Drive,” he explained. “In high-rises, there are all these different things that people need to know — you get off an elevator and you don’t know which way to go. So we break down even which way you have to go to get off the elevator, and we keep the profile sheet from the MLS.” This way, agents can access that information on their phones, and the listing sheets can’t get creased or rained on.

## TAKING CARE WITH COMMUNICATION

Laricy noted that sometimes other agents

involved in the deal can be a roadblock to his preferred rate of speed. “If somebody asks me to fax them something, I’m like, ‘I’m not barbaric,’” he said. “So when we run into that, what’s easier is to just say ‘We’ll take care of it.’ I can’t tell you how many times I send out contracts that get signed to other people’s clients. But I’d rather have my assistant do it right the first time.”

He noted that sometimes, he has difficulty finding people online — and he thinks that’s the biggest mistake a real estate agent can make. “You can’t get a hold of someone, and you Google them — and there’s nothing there. Literally nothing there. How can you expect to sell anything if you’re not on Google?”

He’s also not a fan of away messages. “I think an away message is the worst thing anybody can ever do,” he said. “I don’t care where you are in the world nowadays; you have the capability of checking a message. It’s better to check it once a day than to tell people you’re pretty much gone.”



**William Doerlich,**  
Broker at RealtyONEGroup  
BMC Associates, San  
Ramon, California

## BACKGROUND

William Doerlich started the first segment of his real estate career in Berkeley, California, in 1973. He had his license for four years and then transitioned into the technology industry in order to spend more time with his son.

Doerlich got his first smartphone in 1986, which is why he has a 415 area code for an East Bay cell phone line — today, his office and Google phone numbers both route to his smartphone.

In 2003, his son, by then a mortgage broker, told Doerlich he should get his license again. “I got seriously back into the business in 2004,” he explained.

## LEAD GENERATION

Doerlich is a Zillow premier agent and also invests in “a couple” of ZIP codes on realtor.com, though not as heavily as Zillow.

“All of my leads come through my mobile; it’s either text or

email,” he said. “That can be a little daunting because a lot of people are trolling the Internet looking for houses after the kids are asleep, after 10 p.m. I’ve gotten them at 3 a.m., 5 a.m.”

He uses Zurple as his primary tool for responding quickly to leads because of the tool’s IDX integration and ability to craft a response based on whether the lead is a buyer or a seller and interested in an active or inactive property. After that initial contact, he will follow up with the lead via text, email or phone, depending on the client’s preference, as quickly as he can.

## IN THE FIELD

Doerlich has ensured that all of his devices are mobile, from his laptop to his iPad. “If you’re with a client or out in the field, you really can’t say, ‘Can you give me your password?’” he said, “and you can’t rely on Xfinity or AT&T to be available everywhere.

He uses iCloud and has paid for extra storage so that he can access his documents across all his devices. “That’s come in handy a few times when I’m on the road and someone needs something. ‘OK, let me pull over to the side of the road and you’ll have it in five minutes.’”

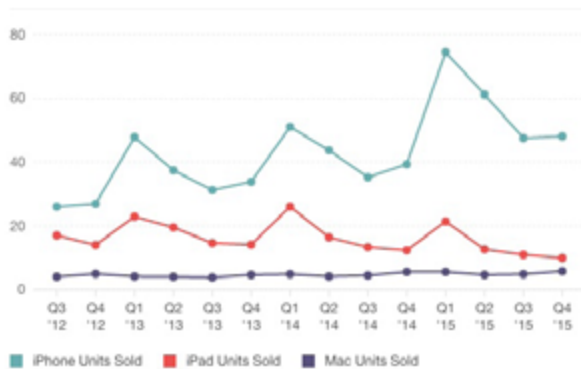
## TAKING CARE WITH COMMUNICATION

“I find that a lot of people look at text and email, and even



## Apple Product Unit Sales Over Time

Global Units Sold in Millions



Dates represent Apple's fiscal quarters.

Source: Apple Investor Relations.

[See more details](#)

GRAPHIQ

though it's a business communication and you are communicating with a client, they aren't putting care into it," said Doerlich. "I check it to make sure it's right.

"If I send a text to another agent, I want to make sure I introduce myself and give them my company name. Some people just text and say 'I want to see the property,' and I want to say, 'Who are you?' I might not have your mobile phone in my contacts.

"If it's another agent, you want to look professional, and if it's

a client, you want to look like somebody who pays attention to the details," he added.

## DRAWING BOUNDARIES WITH DEVICES

Client expectations regarding access to their agents and fast responses to their questions has definitely increased, said Doerlich. "I think there is an expectation, whether it's good or bad," he said.

"One of the things in real estate is, you've got to at some point draw some boundaries because it is a 24/7 event. I just did open houses Saturday and Sunday, and then I feel guilty when I got to the office at 10 a.m. Monday morning. It's OK to walk the dog and take a longer walk — you've always got your phone with you."

## DOES IT HELP CONSUMERS? AGENTS?

"I think it's great that the consumer has access to this information," said Doerlich. "Most of my clients will send me properties that they like, and I'll send them some, but they know a lot better what they're looking for, and I tell them: You send me the property, and I'll vet it for you. They've got a lot of data; my job is to broker that as information that's usable and informative to them."

## HOW CAN AGENTS USE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY TO THRIVE?

Doerlich said that first and foremost, agents need to be adaptable. "They need to look at change and understand: Is it good, is it bad, how can I use it to make it easier to do my business and accomplish my client goals. And then use it; don't be afraid of it. Not everything's going to be right for everybody.



**Debbie Biery,**  
Broker, eXp Realty,  
Bellingham,  
Washington

## BACKGROUND

Debbie Biery got her real estate license in 1999, and although she did have a phone before she became an agent, she said "it was very basic."

She said she spent much more time on her desktop than anywhere else when she first started — but that's changed rather drastically; although based in Washington, as of publication Biery is touring the country with eXp Realty founder and CEO Glenn Sanford in a motorcoach.

## LEAD GENERATION

Biery said that she started using an online lead tool called Kunversion when she joined EXP. She likes the live chat functionality, because "it's important to get back to online leads right away," she said. Biery is sent the chat conversation

via text message. "I know there's a person chatting right now, so I can call or email them and check in," she explained.

She also likes Facebook as a lead generation tool, one she can also manage via mobile device.

## IN THE FIELD

Biery's a heavy user of Google Drive and said that they were going to be introducing SkySlope, which she hoped would

give the brokerage more ability to manage transactions on mobile devices — SkySlope has an iPad app. "Mostly, I am just using the Google platform," she said.

## TAKING CARE WITH COMMUNICATION

Biery listed "typos" when asked about the biggest mistake agents make on mobile devices. "I think typos are commonplace and it happens, but it's unprofessional," she said. "It gives a sense that, 'I'm in such a hurry, you're in such a hurry, let's just have a quick exchange and it doesn't really matter what's being said.' Thirty seconds more to make sure it's right is not going to kill you. I just think it comes across as unprofessional. It's a big deal buying or selling a home. Slow down; do it right."

## HOW CAN AGENTS USE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY TO THRIVE?

Biery suggested that "finding an app or two that really streamline the business, and help follow up and get back to people right away" are keys to success for agents just starting out. "Clients do expect a response right away," she iterates.

## What People Have Trouble Doing Without Their Smartphones

*44% of smartphone owners have had trouble doing something because their phone wasn't with them; here are some recent situations they describe*

Getting directions or finding an address	25%
Trying to meet someone / let someone know you're running late	13
Call someone or get in touch with others (general)	10
Look up online info or complete online transaction	9
Access email, calendar, or address book	9
Get help in an emergency	8
Shopping (forgot list, needed advice, etc)	6
Online banking	2
Work-related tasks	2

Pew Research Center American Trends Panel survey, October 3-27 2014.

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**Bud Clark,**  
Managing Broker,  
Willis Allen Real  
Estate, La Jolla,  
California

## BACKGROUND

Bud Clark doesn't work directly with clients; "I'm usually called in when something goes awry," he said. His job as the managing broker, he believes, "is to really be a business manager, deal with a conflict and try to resolve issues before they get out of control."

And, he said, "a managing broker has different requirements for mobile than does an agent."

"Mobile is a productivity tool, and what that means is, you just have to be in contact."

—Bud Clark

## TAKING CARE WITH COMMUNICATION

"Clients are much smarter these days,"

said Clark. "Our clients are pretty well-informed. Most of them do have a smart-phone — most of them have an iPhone — and it kind of smooths the way for us."

Clark said he ensures that his agents have access to everything from transaction to legal documents, and that they can access those resources from their mobile devices.

"Our managers are on call 24/7," said Clark. "Some colleagues I deal with only take calls between, say, 2 and 3 p.m. every day. They have some kind of rule like that, which astounds me. They don't want to deal with all the problems when they arise."

This is a time-management problem, in Clark's opinion. "Our agents are responsible, and if we have an issue, we really get on it," he noted. "A lot of managers and brokers really aren't available in a timely manner;

they're too busy doing retention studies."

Clark said he makes a point to be available for troubleshooting. "I tell my agents to put 'urgent' in the subject line if they're

sending an email, and I'll get back to them as instantaneously as possible," he said. He tries to return calls and text messages immediately, too.

## HOW CAN AGENTS AND BROKERS USE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY TO THRIVE?

"Mobile is a productivity tool," argued Clark, "and what that means is, you just have to be in contact. As brokers and managers, you really need to be available all the time. That's what it's about: availability."

And although Clark touts mobile devices as the best way to make himself available 24/7, he also noted that agents and brokers can't forget the basics, either.

"I always keep a pen and paper by my side when I'm talking on my mobile phone," he said. "If you're on the phone and someone tells you they're a buyer or a seller and names a price, and you're used to keeping notes on your phone, you won't remember that. So even though mobile is absolutely the only way to go, don't forget the pen and paper. Because when you're working on a deal, you forget."



**Steve Weiss,**  
Broker/Owner, Coast & County  
Brokers, San Luis Obispo,  
California

## BACKGROUND

Weiss got his real estate license in 1986 — in 1988, he didn't use a cell phone, but he did use a two-way radio phone. "Although mobile, it was mounted on the center console of my vehicle like many of the first cellular phones were.

And having that phone was a game-changer, he said. He could drive clients around town and if they saw a house with a sign in front of it that looked promising, he didn't have to drive back to the office to call the number on the sign.

## LEAD GENERATION

Most of Weiss' leads come from referrals, he said, though he is a Redfin partner and is expected to respond to the leads Redfin sends him within a certain amount of time — four hours after he accepts the lead.

## IN THE FIELD

Between DocuSign and ZipForm, Weiss said he is able to manage almost all of his business via his iPhone, but that he runs into snafus with the contact management system, SkySlope; he said the platform's iPad app works well, but because he uses an iPhone 6 Plus, he said he hasn't invested in an iPad, so that's one hangup he's experienced when managing transactions.

Sometimes, other agents — not technology — can be the speedbumps.

"I'm working with an agent right now who's in his 30s, and he



doesn't use DocuSign, he uses all 'wet' signatures, and it drives me crazy," Weiss said.

Weiss said he mostly texts and emails with clients — they speak on the phone relatively rarely.

## DRAWING BOUNDARIES WITH DEVICES

There's a downside, of course, to being well-known for your accessibility. "I think you can create your own Frankenstein, if you choose to," Weiss said. "Because my phone is always on, if I get an email or text message from a client, no matter what time, I'll answer it. And I've been complimented over and over again for my communication skills. Now they've come to expect that, but that's who I am, that's how I roll."

## AGENT SUPPORT

As the broker/owner, Weiss said he can tell when one of his 14 agents is struggling with something tech-related, "and I'll sit down and work with them," he said. "That's what I've done with our transaction management system and DocuSign."

He said, however, that training isn't typically his biggest issue — it's convincing his agents that when they use free software to manage their business, "you get what you pay for. I try to encourage them as much as I can to invest in their business and spend money on the best products available to us, because not

**"It's all about making the client experience that much better."**

— Steve Weiss

only does it help you, it's all about making the client experience that much better."

## WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT MOBILE TECHNOLOGY?

"It's allowed me to perform my duties from anywhere in the world," Weiss said. "Having a device in my pocket that allows me to instantly communicate with anyone, anywhere the world has changed the world of business."

## LOOKING AHEAD

Weiss said that in his opinion, the instant showing trend is "going to fall flat on its face."

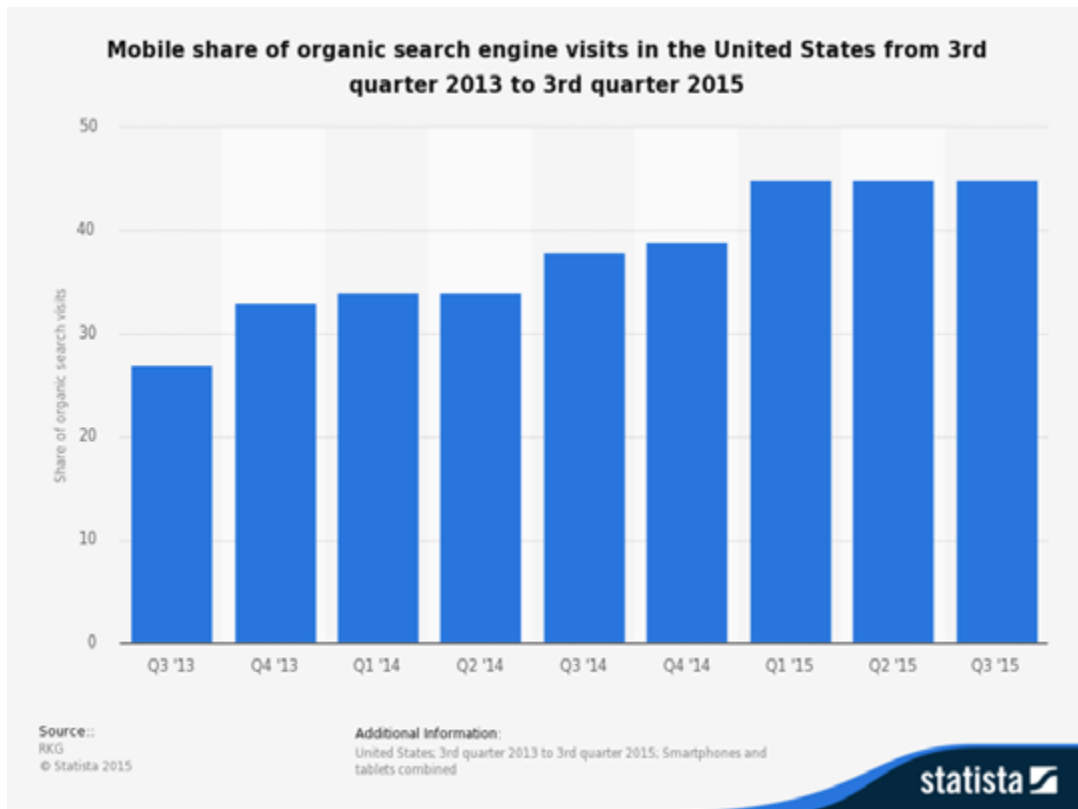
"There are just too many variables involved with that — whether the property is available, and if it's not vacant, there are occupants, tenants, whatever it might be, so you might not be able to show it right now."

And he said that there's one thing agents and brokers should keep in mind: There is no replacement for the human touch. "None whatsoever," he contends. "We need that human interaction and that support to get through the transaction."

He remembers sitting with clients who'd accepted an offer on a new home but had termite work to do and some septic issues in their current home. "They said, 'When do we do this?' And I said, 'I'll take care of everything; you guys just move into your new home, and I've got you covered.'"

"No one but a human being can do that," he said.

RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY  
AMBER TAUFEN.





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