

From: Joe Horning <jhorning@shorewest.com>

Subject: IDX/VOW agent attribution policy

Dear Rodney, Charlie, Katie, Greg and NAR MLS Leadership,

Change and evolution in our industry is good and evitable. As business practices evolve, consumer expectations modernize, and society in general transforms so too should the Real Estate industry adapt and change. Key in this transition is national MLS policy.

Today's policy question is about listing attribution on listing IDX display. I, like many MLS participants, support increasing consumer transparency by providing direct Brokerage contact information with existing Brokerage name attribution on all IDX displays. This would further support existing MLS policy ensuring broker intellectual property is respected and the role of the MLS Participant is honored. However, there are some that believe that individual MLS Subscribers (Agents) contact information also should be required to be included on all IDX displays. I do not agree with this request on several grounds. Below are some of those reasons:

- The MLS Participant (Broker) is the only member of MLS. Offers of cooperation and compensation can only be offered from one MLS Participant to another. Subscribers cannot join an MLS individually. They must first belong to an office where their Broker is an MLS Participant. Additionally, existing IDX policy is built on the belief that as a benefit of MLS membership, one Participant may advertise a competitor Participant's listing(s) on their website/mobile app if they agree to also allow display of their own listing inventory on other competitor's like IDX displays. This benefit does not extend to individual subscribers (Agents) as a requirement in existing MLS IDX Policy. This request extends rights and privileges that do not currently exist and potentially harms the fundamental role that the Broker is the MLS member.
- As a fundamental truth, the listing is the intellectual property of the MLS Participant. Outside of agreed upon MLS & IDX policy, there should be no policy that dictates to the owner of this intellectual property (Broker) how and what their information can be used.
- Agent Attribution is a "Top Down" request from within the industry. Policy requests are best realized when they originate from a "bottom-up" approach involving fellow MLS Participants. Agent attribution is an example of a request led by Franchises/Networks rather than MLS Participants. The reality is most Brokers do not support this policy request.
- Agent Attribution is a wedge issue. It further creates Agent/Broker disintermediation which only leads to disunity in the industry. Additionally, it harms many existing MLS Participant technology displays, which have been cultivated and greatly financially invested in since IDX policy has been originally implemented. Many Brokers have created this lead generation tool to help them

better compete as well as offer incentives for their agents. Agent attribution could harm this and dilute the effectiveness of this tremendous investment.

- Many studies and consumers surveys have consistently shown that there is a lack of timely follow-up on the part of Agents from interested consumer via email/phone call. Brokers know this and have created standard phone numbers, email addresses, etc... that provide for timely, and prompt follow up. Mandating Agent attribution would only exacerbate the issue of lack of consumer response and could risk harming the overall Realtor brand as a result.

Respectfully,

Joe Horning

President Shorewest Realtors
Chairman of Metro MLS, Markt
Chair-Elect Wisconsin Realtor Association
Past Chairman LeadingRE
Past Chairman The Realty Alliance