

# 03-16 Meeting: Real Estate Industry Trends 2026, AI Integration, and Market Share Strategy

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## Action Items

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- @[All Agents/Brokers] - Implement a 'CYA' (Cover Your Ass) form that explains the pros and cons of private listings and documents that it was the seller's choice.
- @[All Agents/Brokers] - Implement a disclosure form for affiliate relationships that provides at least three choices per service category (e.g., mortgage, title).
- @[All agents] - Begin regularly experimenting with AI tools like Claude and ChatGPT to understand their capabilities and improve workflow.
- @[Agents] - Shift your business to have at least 50% of its inventory be listings.

## Key Decisions

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- Compass has acquired Anywhere. - This creates a single entity with approximately 320,000 agents worldwide and 20% of the U.S. market share.
- To leverage AI tools for a home sale - Rationale: Estimated savings of approximately 3% of the total sale price.
- To adopt a business strategy focused on taking market share from competitors - Rationale: The overall market is projected to be flat, similar to last year, meaning growth must come from competitive gains.
- The company's strategy is centered on gaining listing market share to protect agents from a coming "private listings war."

## Detailed Minutes

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[00:00-01:53] The real estate industry in 2025 was characterized by significant legal challenges and a trend toward vertical integration.

- The industry is experiencing intense legal scrutiny, with lawsuits against major entities like the National Association of Realtors (antitrust), Zillow (antitrust), and Rocket (RESPA violations).

- James noted that the industry is a target for class-action litigation because it is perceived as disorganized and often non-compliant with rules. This trend is expected to continue.
- Companies like Rocket, Lower, and Babu are pursuing vertical integration, aiming to monetize every part of the real estate transaction.
- Other notable trends from 2025 included industry consolidation, the growing traction of private listings, and the “de-risking” of NAR by pushing governance down to local MLSs and associations.

**[01:53-03:49] The acquisition of Anywhere by Compass marks a significant consolidation event in 2026, raising concerns about market concentration.**

- James’s theme for 2026 is “hold my beer,” indicating extreme unpredictability to the point where projections will not be attempted.
- Key Decision: Compass has acquired Anywhere. - This creates a single entity with approximately 320,000 agents worldwide and 20% of the U.S. market share.
- The acquisition combines major brands like Century 21, Coldwell Banker, ERA, Better Homes and Gardens, Sotheby’s, and Corcoran under Compass International.
- A new agreement between Compass and Redfin will display Compass’s “coming soon” and private listings on Redfin’s website. James expresses concern about this development.
- James notes that the trend of private listing networks is accelerating, a development they had been forecasting.
- Another major independent brokerage, Howard Hanna, launched its own private listing network called “Hanna List” last week, joining the trend.

**[03:49-04:46] The forecast for 2026 predicts increased litigation, continued vertical integration, and an unprecedented wave of mergers and acquisitions.**

- James anticipates more litigation, as the industry is not improving its adherence to policies for contracts and disclosures.
- Vertical integration will continue as companies try to “go up funnel” to control the entire consumer journey: initial contact, loan, title, insurance, home warranty, and servicing, often bundled for a discount. This will be amplified by AI.
- The industry is on the verge of the largest wave of mergers and acquisitions in its history, which is starting “literally right now.”
- This consolidation is a necessary consequence of major companies growing larger.

[04:46-05:42] **James forecasts several key market shifts for 2026, driven by competitive pressures and new industry dynamics.**

- The real estate portals (Zillow, [Realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com), Holmes) are expected to announce countermeasures in response to the Redfin-Compass deal to maintain their market positions.
- Private listings are predicted to become mainstream, a trend James views as detrimental to the industry and especially to consumers, calling the purported benefits “bullshit lies.”
  - James urges the audience to be more vocal against private listings in their local markets.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) will become a much more significant topic of conversation within the industry by 2026.

[05:43-07:31] **James expresses concern over NAR’s decision to “de-risk” by delegating policy decisions to local MLSs, which could lead to industry fragmentation.**

- The National Association of Realtors (NAR) is shifting policy-making to local Multiple Listing Services (MLSs) and associations to avoid national antitrust lawsuits.
- This decentralization is problematic because agents often work across multiple MLSs. Disparate rules, policies, and fees between bordering MLSs will create confusion and compliance issues.
- The fragmentation of rules across over 500 MLSs will make it more difficult for technology companies to innovate and integrate their services.
- While not a proponent of “big government,” James believes a national governance structure is necessary to prevent these issues and protect the industry.
- James also emphasizes the critical lobbying role of NAR in Washington D.C., stating the industry is “one bad policy decision away” from a housing crisis.
  - Quote: “If we don’t have Shannon McGann and that lobbying power in D.C. we are going to run into a very serious problem.”
  - The real estate sector accounts for 25% of the U.S. GDP, and a policy mistake could cause the economy to “go off a cliff.”

[07:33-09:16] **The lawsuit between Compass and Zillow over private listings is identified as a critical issue with significant long-term implications.**

- James highlights the lawsuit's importance, noting that all consumers use portals like Zillow to find real estate, and sellers expect their listings to be present there.
- There is a concern about how Zillow might react if it loses control over its website's inventory, with possibilities including becoming a full brokerage or changing its rules.
- James is glad that Zillow appears to be winning the case so far, with a judge having "slapped down Compass a few times already in the injunction."
- The trend of private listings going mainstream is confirmed as a prediction that has now come to pass.

[09:16-12:01] **James deconstructs the strategy behind private listings, arguing it is a "game theory" play for inventory control and recruiting, not seller choice.**

- Private listings are a classic business play for large companies to maximize profit by attempting to "double-end" as many deals as possible, especially in a low-inventory market.
- James refutes the marketing spin that this is about "seller choice," stating that sellers have always had choices within the MLS to control privacy (e.g., hiding an address, non-exclusive listings).
- The strategy, according to game theory, is to capture inventory, control it, and generate leads exclusively for the company's own agents first.
  - A property is only shared with the broader market if no internal buyer can be found.
- This creates a competitive problem where other companies feel forced to follow suit to prevent their agents from leaving to join the firm with exclusive inventory.
- The strategy is designed to fundamentally change the industry structure, with three major companies already participating.
- This practice is harmful to sellers, who are misled into believing limited exposure will yield the highest price, which defies basic supply and demand economics.

[12:03-13:58] **James draws a historical parallel to the 1960s to illustrate the consumer harm caused by withholding listings from the MLS.**

- James uses a photo of his grandfather's real estate company in 1967 as an example.
- His grandfather's practice was to show new listings to his own agents first. Only if they couldn't find a buyer would the property be placed on the MLS, which

was a book printed only once a month.

- This practice of brokerages trying to sell their internal inventory first was described as “awful for consumers.”
- James expresses sadness that the industry is potentially reverting to this outdated and harmful model.

[13:58-14:51] **The governance structure of organized real estate, particularly NAR, is identified as a massive liability risk for brokerages.**

- Policy decisions made by NAR have resulted in significant liability and lawsuits for the brokerage community, as experienced firsthand by James.
- Every major brokerage is now examining how governance should be restructured to mitigate this risk.
- James proposes a new governance model:
  - The decision-making body should be smaller and must include representatives from large companies, as they bear most of the liability.
  - Meetings to decide policy must include antitrust lawyers, large brokers, and insurance carriers to vet legal risks before implementation.
- Failure to reform this structure could lead to more companies choosing to disassociate from NAR.

[14:51-17:11] **James outlines several critical legal risks and best practices for brokers and agents to mitigate liability.**

- **Cooperative Compensation:** Brokers and agents should not engage in cooperative compensation, even if technically allowed by a settlement. All fees should be separated.
  - Seller fees should be charged to the seller, and any buyer’s agent fee paid by the seller should be negotiated through the offer and handled at closing.
  - Quote: “You should never be sharing compensation with a competitor. That’s the foundation for the lawsuit that happened with Burnett Sitzer.”
- **Private Listings:** Stay away from private listings. If a seller insists on one for a legitimate reason, it must be thoroughly documented.
  - Action Item: @[All Agents/Brokers] - Implement a 'CYA' (Cover Your Ass) form that explains the pros and cons of private listings and documents that it was the seller's choice.

- **Single Agent Dual Agency:** Avoid this practice, as it will become a hot-button issue. As private listings increase, so will dual agency, leading to more lawsuits.
  - This will cause E&O insurance carriers to raise rates and eventually drop coverage for this practice.
- **Do Not Call List:** Do not call anyone on the DNC list. James settled a lawsuit for \$50,000 over a violation, which was ultimately paid by the person who made the call.

[17:13-19:57] **Full disclosure of referral fees and affiliate relationships is crucial for risk management, supported by specific form examples.**

- **Referral Fee Disclosure:** All referral fees must be disclosed to clients, regardless of personal feelings about it.
  - James cites a form from the California Association of Realtors that details the fee amount and rationale.
  - Agents should become skilled at explaining the value they provide in exchange for the fee, such as holding the referred agent accountable.
- **Affiliate Relationship Disclosure:** James highlights a form created by a competitor as a best-practice example for disclosing affinity relationships and avoiding steering allegations (as seen in litigation involving Rocket and Zillow).
  - Action Item: @[All Agents/Brokers] - Implement a disclosure form for affiliate relationships that provides at least three choices per service category (e.g., mortgage, title).
  - This form should clarify that the client has the choice to use any provider.
  - James warns that if the portals lose their steering-related lawsuits, lawyers will target individual agents and brokerages next.

[19:58-21:50] **James presents data on industry consolidation, showing a significant drop in NAR membership and a high percentage of non-transacting agents.**

- NAR membership peaked in 2022 at approximately 1.58 million and is budgeted to fall to around 1.2 million by 2026.
- This attrition is contextualized by a statistic: 47% of all Realtors did not complete a single transaction last year.
- The rise of real estate teams is also a major factor in this consolidation.
  - The percentage of agents on a team grew from 15% in 2010 to 35% in 2024.

- Teams grew their transaction volume by 405% over an 11-year period.
- This trend means teams are capturing more business, partly from portals, leaving less for solo agents and contributing to attrition.

**[21:51-23:18] An analysis of brokerage profitability and agent movement highlights the financial fragility of brokerages and key agent retention challenges.**

- Brokerage EBITDA margins are currently down to approximately 3.5%, making them highly sensitive to small market changes.
- James reminds agents that their brokerage's profitability is essential, as it funds operations, insurance, and liability coverage.
- On average, between 16% and 18% of agents move between companies each year.

**[23:19-24:16] Data reveals that agents with lower sales volumes are the most likely to switch companies.**

- James presents data showing the annual sales volume of the 16% of agents who switch brokerages.
- Agents who produce between \$1 million and \$5 million in annual volume are the most likely to move.
- This is logical, as they are often trying to transition from part-time to full-time careers and are seeking better opportunities to advance.
- James concludes this section by predicting significant industry consolidation over the next few years before pivoting to the topic of AI.

**[24:16-26:05] James introduces the topic of AI by showing a news clip about a homeowner who used ChatGPT to successfully sell his house without a real estate agent.**

- James frames AI as the "greatest opportunity ever" for agents who incorporate it into their business.
- A video is presented about Robert Levine, a homeowner who used ChatGPT for the entire home-selling process.
- AI was used for:
  - Planning a timeline for packing and listing.
  - Pricing strategy.
  - Determining which rooms to repaint for the best ROI.
  - Designing marketing materials and the online listing.
  - Getting the home on the MLS and scheduling showings.

- Generating the final sales contract.
- The home received five offers within 72 hours and had a signed contract within five days of listing.

[26:06-26:50] **The use of AI in real estate transactions, exemplified by a “For Sale By Owner” (FSBO) case, is presented as a cost-saving measure, though not a complete replacement for professional services.**

- A specific individual, Robert, used an AI assistant for most of his home sale process, only hiring a lawyer to review the contract and legal documents.
- The primary motivation for using AI was financial savings.
  - **Key Decision:** To leverage AI tools for a home sale - **Rationale:** Estimated savings of approximately 3% of the total sale price.
- While AI is acknowledged as an evolving part of the real estate world, it is not seen as a replacement for realtors, as many individuals may not be prepared to handle the process themselves.
- It is suggested that repeated use of AI tools can build user confidence.

[26:52-29:27] **James argues that AI will not replace realtors due to several factors limiting the growth of “For Sale By Owner” (FSBO) transactions.**

- James identifies the AI-assisted sale as a type of FSBO, a category that has been declining and reached a historic low of 5% in the United States last year, down from 6-7% in previous years.
- Several reasons are provided for the limited appeal of FSBO, even with AI assistance:
  - **Litigation Risk & Complexity:** The fear of lawsuits and the overwhelming amount of online information leads people to seek professional guidance.
  - **Time Constraints:** With 65% of US households having dual incomes (up from 60% a few years ago), most people lack the time to manage their own home sale.
  - **Infrequent & High-Stakes Nature:** The average person buys and sells a home no more than three times in their lifetime, making it an infrequent, significant, and intimidating transaction where human help is desired.
- James notes that companies like “Try home” are exploring automated transaction models that use AI but keep a realtor in the loop at a discounted rate, though the viability of this model is uncertain.

**[29:27-31:21] The future of real estate is positioned as “augmented intelligence” or “human in the loop,” where AI empowers agents rather than replacing them.**

- James notes that even ChatGPT’s prediction for industry consolidation (15-35% over ten years) has decreased from the previous year, suggesting a revised outlook on AI’s impact.
- The belief is that AI will be used to empower agents to be more effective.
- AI is not expected to replace core human-centric realtor functions, including:
  - Providing pricing advice with specific local context and market knowledge.
  - Handling complex negotiations.
  - Solving problems that arise mid-transaction.
  - Acting as a “therapist” for clients, providing trust, empathy, and emotional support.
  - Engaging with the local community.
- To succeed in an AI-driven world, agents are advised to amplify the human connection and focus on relationships.
- A breakout session by a speaker named Charlie is recommended, as he reportedly gets 92% of his business from his sphere of influence through deep client relationships, without focusing on AI.

**[31:21-32:17] Agents are strongly encouraged to actively use and experiment with AI tools like Claude and ChatGPT to enhance their productivity.**

- James recommends that every agent should be regularly experimenting with AI.
- James shares a personal example of using both Claude and ChatGPT, noting they produce different results and can still “hallucinate.”
  - Action Item: @[All agents] - Begin regularly experimenting with AI tools like Claude and ChatGPT to understand their capabilities and improve workflow.
- A specific successful use case is cited: uploading a seven-page training outline to Claude and having it generate a perfectly formatted PowerPoint presentation in four minutes, a task that would have otherwise taken hours.
- The key to success with AI is learning how to provide effective inputs and prompts to amplify personal output.

**[32:17-34:14] James presents a pessimistic short-term outlook on the US economy and housing market, advising agents to prepare for a year similar to**

**the last one.**

- James believes the US economy is on “shaky ground” and not very healthy.
- The previous year was the worst on record for existing home sales, with all economic forecasts, including James’s, proving incorrect.
- James is not convinced the current year will be much better, expressing doubt about NAR’s earlier prediction of a 14% increase in sales.
- While the average 30-year fixed-rate mortgage has been decreasing, recent geopolitical events (“another war”) have caused rates to rise again.
- The average home price continues to rise, though at a slower rate, which provides a slight improvement in affordability.

**[34:14-36:00] A persistent and massive housing deficit, exacerbated by a recent halt in construction, is a primary driver of the current US housing market problems.**

- The US has a significant housing deficit, estimated by economists to be between 4.0 and 4.7 million units.
- A graph comparing household formation (orange bar) to housing starts (blue bar) illustrates the problem.
  - After 2008, builders stopped construction due to oversupply, but household formation continued, creating a gap.
  - In 2022, as interest rates climbed, builders halted construction again while household formation continued, widening the inventory gap.
- James projects that it will take five to seven years to resolve this inventory issue.
- The housing affordability index (where 100 represents a median-income household affording a median-priced home) shows that affordability, while improving from the lows of 2023-2024, remains a crisis.

**[36:00-37:55] Low consumer confidence, driven by economic instability and anemic job growth, is identified as a major barrier to housing market activity.**

- Inflation, though decreasing from its peak due to Federal Reserve actions, has not yet reached the Fed’s 2% target.
- A concerning trend is the stagnation of job growth in the US as of 2025, following the recovery from pandemic-related job losses.
- James argues that consumer confidence is a primary driver of the real estate market, as people do not make major moves when they feel insecure about their jobs, the economy, or their income.
- Consumer confidence has plummeted over the past two years, hitting its lowest level since 2014 in January of the current year.

- James believes that restoring stability is essential for confidence and the real estate market to recover.

**[37:55-39:22] Geopolitical conflict is negatively impacting the spring housing market by creating economic uncertainty and inflationary pressure.**

- James states that war is inflationary, leading to rising gas prices and consumer spending concerns.
- Global supply chains are being stalled due to shipping lane problems, affecting the availability of goods.
- While there was initial excitement for the spring market, James is no longer confident it will be strong due to the current situation.
- The duration of the conflict will determine the severity of its impact on the US housing market over the coming months.

**[39:22-40:22] Given a flat market forecast, agents are instructed to focus on gaining market share from competitors to achieve growth.**

- **Key Decision:** To adopt a business strategy focused on taking market share from competitors - **Rationale:** The overall market is projected to be flat, similar to last year, meaning growth must come from competitive gains.
- James frames the upcoming sessions as a “boot camp” to teach agents how to win every buyer and seller presentation.
- An upcoming session by Jim Paschetty is highlighted, who will deliver a masterclass on becoming a top listing agent.
- Despite the challenging market, consumer data shows record-high satisfaction and desire to use realtors.

**[40:22-42:05] Agents must address a significant gap between consumer perception and reality by being more transparent and improving the client experience.**

- A major challenge is that consumers, on both the buy and sell side, do not understand what realtors do.
  - Data point: 46% of buyers believe their agent works less than 15 hours to help them buy a house.
- Agents are failing to meet stated customer needs.
  - Data point: Floor plans are the third most requested item by buyers, yet only 33% of US listings include one.

- James, currently in the process of buying a house, describes the current buyer experience as “sucks” due to common issues:
  - Lack of response to inquiries.
  - Poor photo quality.
  - Absence of 3D walkthroughs and floor plans, leaving buyers without context.
  - Agents not showing up for showings.
  - An overemphasis on the agent’s needs rather than the buyer’s.

**[42:06-45:22] Two video examples are used to illustrate the power of creating an emotional human connection in real estate marketing.**

- The first video features a home “narrating” its history, creating an emotional connection with potential buyers by focusing on the life lived within its walls. James praises this as a “badass” and effective marketing approach.
- The second video shows an agent surprising a young girl with the keys to her dream home, which her widowed father had secretly purchased for her.
- The key takeaway is that agents do not just sell houses; they provide profound life experiences.
- James emphasizes that creating this human connection is what truly matters and can be captured and shared at little cost.

**[45:24-46:33] An anecdotal story about a realtor turning a robbery attempt into a home sale was used to illustrate a new approach to client engagement.**

- Speaker 6 recounted a news story from Burlington, NC, where a realtor, Justin Bird, was approached by a man with a weapon demanding valuables after an open house.
- The realtor, Justin Bird (Speaker 7), responded by offering his real estate services.
- The would-be robber became interested in the property, signed a buyer agency agreement, and ultimately put in an offer on the house.
- Speaker 7 noted the suspect’s comment: “this is probably the best realtor he’s ever had.”
- Speaker 6 confirmed that no injuries were reported and the suspect left without incident.

**[46:41-47:34] James Dwiggins contrasted different advertising styles to advocate for an emotional, relatable, and agent-focused marketing approach.**

- James analyzed three videos (including the realtor story) and identified their strengths: emotional connection, focus on the house, and connecting with the agent.

- A key takeaway was the need to shift advertising strategies to be more like the examples shown.
- James then transitioned to a “boot camp” section focused on home buyers in 2025.
- Key demographic statistics for buyers in 2025 were presented:
  - Median Age: 56
  - First-time Buyer Median Age: 38
  - First-time Buyers as a percentage of all buyers last year: 24%
  - Buyer Types: Married couples (54%), single females (20%), single males (10%), unmarried couples (8%).
  - Racial/Ethnic Breakdown: White/Caucasian (83%), Hispanic/Latino (7%), Black/African American (5%), Asian/Pacific Islander (4%).
- James emphasized the importance of knowing these customer demographics.

**[47:36-48:31] A list of the top twelve things buyers want was presented to help agents curate a better client experience.**

- James highlighted that the buyer demographic stats reveal a “real issue” with housing availability for everyone.
- Agents were instructed to photograph and write down the list of 12 buyer wants:
  - i. Professional photos
  - ii. Detailed information about properties for sale
  - iii. Floor plans
  - iv. Neighborhood information
  - v. Detailed information about sold properties
  - vi. Virtual tour walkthroughs
  - vii. Contract status
  - viii. Property videos
  - ix. Interactive websites
  - x. Virtual open houses
- James stressed that this list is a direct communication from buyers about what they are looking for.

[48:31-50:50] **James detailed a buyer presentation strategy focused on demonstrating superior value by proactively addressing buyer needs.**

- A key statistic was cited: 72% of U.S. consumers would pay more for a premium experience, prioritizing it over price.
- James's presentation framework involves showing buyers he understands their needs and then explaining how he provides solutions for each one, differentiating himself from competitors.
- He provided specific solutions and recommended products for top buyer wants:
  - **Photos:** The agent will personally take photos if the listing agent's are inadequate.
  - **Detailed Info:** Uses MLS and a product called `RealReports AI`.
  - **Floor Plans:** Acknowledges only 33% of listings have them and offers to create them using a product called `Cubicasa`, which takes 3-5 minutes.
  - **Neighborhood Info:** Uses `locallogic.co` and `RPR` to provide more data than most.
  - **Virtual Tours:** Offers to create one for free using `Zillow 3D Home` if one doesn't exist.
  - **Property Videos:** Will create one for remote buyers.
  - **Touring:** Will FaceTime or tour any property for clients who cannot be present.

[50:50-51:46] **James outlined additional value-added services provided to buyers to further differentiate from competitors.**

- The core strategy is to continually increase the agent's value proposition.
- Additional services offered include:
  - **Virtual Staging:** To show a home's potential if remodeled, using a product called `StyleDoc`.
  - **Remodel Cost Estimation:** Using a program called `Next Home Refresh` through `Notable`.
  - **Process Transparency:** A collaborative experience through `Raise` to show what is happening in the transaction.
  - **Utility Services:** Assistance with changing utilities via `NextHome Concierge`.
  - **Home Warranty:** Provided with a purchase through `American Home Shield`.
  - **Home Maintenance:** Offered through `Front Door`.

- **Long-term Asset Management:** Using Homeowner AI to manage the home as an asset for the 8-13 years the client will own it, including annual asset review meetings.

[51:46-52:42] **The presentation shifted to seller statistics, emphasizing the importance of speed and sphere of influence in securing listings.**

- James introduced the topic of becoming a better listing agent.
- Key seller demographic statistics were presented:
  - Median Seller Age: 63
  - Average Time in Home: 10 years
  - Married couples comprised 72% of sellers.
- A critical statistic was highlighted: 80% of sellers work with the first agent they speak with.
- Lead sources for sellers who found their agent were detailed:
  - Friend, neighbor, or relative: 37%
  - Previous agent: 29%
  - Direct outreach from an agent: 5%

[52:42-54:35] **A listing presentation strategy was detailed, contrasting average agent marketing with a superior, buyer-focused approach.**

- James presented a list of marketing activities used by the average US listing agent and their adoption rates:
  - Multiple Listing Service (MLS): 85%
  - Yard Signs: 67%
  - Open House: 59%
  - Social Media: 23%
- The recommended pitch involves showing the seller what the average agent does, and then presenting a curated experience designed to get the highest price.
- The strategy mirrors the buyer presentation: it explicitly states what buyers want (professional photos, floorplans, etc.) and then shows the specific solution the agent provides for each need (e.g., "We not only use the MLS, but we use RealReports AI").
- The goal is to continuously increase the agent's perceived value to the seller.

[54:37-56:30] **James explained how to justify the cost of premium services by identifying the three customers an agent serves with each listing.**

- An additional layer is added to the listing presentation, showcasing services that enhance the property's appeal.
  - **Virtual Staging:** Using `stiled` to show buyers a remodeled version of the home.
  - **Remodel Costing:** Providing a service for buyers to understand potential renovation costs.
  - **Other Services:** Collaborative experience via `Raise`, utility changes via `Concierge`, and spotlight listings on Zillow and [Realtor.com](#).
- James addressed the anticipated objection that these services are expensive by identifying the three "customers" of a listing:
  - i. The seller.
  - ii. The buyer.
  - iii. The potential seller down the street who is observing the agent's marketing efforts.
- Forgetting the third customer means missing a major opportunity, as potential clients are judging an agent's marketing quality when they look at listings.

[56:31-57:26] **Agents were urged to adopt a premium service model to differentiate themselves and capture more market share.**

- The core message for sellers should be: "My job is to get you the highest price possible in the shortest amount of time, and we do it through market exposure."
- James argued that AI will not replace this level of curated service and that consumers will pay a premium for it.
- Agents should not focus on the cost of a single listing but on the long-term value from attracting more buyers and future listings.
- James announced that Jim Fischetti would be presenting next on how he "crushed listings."

[57:27-59:20] **James reviewed company accomplishments from the past year, including promotions, new programs, and a brand refresh.**

- **Promotions:**
  - Charis Moreno promoted to Chief Revenue Officer.
  - Jim Fischetti promoted to President of Brokerage Operations.

- **New Programs & Tools:**

- Launched a coaching program called **Workman Success Systems** .
- Launched **Next Connect** , a new integrated mobile app.
- Implemented **Real Grader** for virtual business cards and new email signatures.
- Noted the company now has an incredible, fully integrated tech stack built over three years.

- **Brand Refresh:**

- The company completed a brand refresh, replacing turquoise with blue and modernizing fonts.

- **Events:** The company now has 16 regional events hosted by members, with more planned for 2026.

[59:20-01:00:16] **The company's positive business performance and recent awards were highlighted.**

- Despite the market being down, the company was up 1% last year, a result described as "incredible" compared to competitors.
- The company continues to receive awards, which are considered a "north star" for the organization. Key awards mentioned include:
  - Number one franchise for women.
  - Top franchise for owner satisfaction.
  - Top franchise for veterans.
  - Top franchise for under \$50,000 investments.

[01:00:16-01:03:06] **James addressed the changing real estate landscape and outlined the company's strategy for growth and survival.**

- The industry is undergoing a "sea change" with conversations around consolidation, competition, and private listing networks.
- James has recently spoken with CEOs of all major real estate companies, confirming industry-wide discussions about mergers, acquisitions, and private listing networks.
- **Key Decision:** The company's strategy is centered on gaining listing market share to protect agents from a coming "private listings war."
- To compete, NextHome must get bigger, as it is not large enough on its own to compete in the new landscape.

- Strategic options currently under consideration include:
  - Raising capital.
  - Acquiring other companies.
  - Affiliating with other companies and bringing them under the NextHome brand.
- The company is set to grow quickly in 2026 while making every effort to preserve its culture.

[01:03:07-01:05:03] **The company's specific growth initiatives, including a new office model and aggressive AI implementation, were detailed.**

- A new large office model, developed in 2025 and launched in 2026, is already bringing in over 400 agents, with plans to add several thousand more this year.
- This agent growth is aimed at increasing listing inventory, which provides "market protection."
- The company is aggressively implementing AI in 2026:
  - To provide 24-hour support when live staff are unavailable.
  - To build the largest vendor network in company history.
  - To launch a new compliance system for brokerages that will automatically review files for missing items and notify agents.
- These initiatives are designed to create growth and efficiency for agents.

[01:05:03-01:06:54] **James concluded with a call to action for agents to focus on listings to ensure their own success and contribute to the company's strategy.**

- James asked agents to "do their part" in the company's strategic plan for 2026.
- Action Item: @[Agents] - Shift your business to have at least 50% of its inventory be listings.
- The rationale given is that controlling listings is the easiest way to control income and makes private listing wars irrelevant.
- Agents were urged to remember their purpose ("humans over houses"), become the best listing agent possible, and learn to effectively communicate their value and worth to consumers.
- James then introduced the next presenter, Jim Fischetti, who would provide a 20-minute session on how to become an amazing listing agent.