

Why Data Share Trumps MLS Consolidation

September 22, 2016

Announcing the MLS Outlook

The “MLS Outlook” will be an ongoing conversation with experts from all over the U.S. about what the future of the MLS looks like, where cutting-edge MLS’s are going, how they are delivering the most value to their members, and what we aspire to offer to you.

This is the first of many discussions articles, events, and programs about the future of your MLS. “MLS Outlook” and other activities SDAR is undertaking are about listening and learning, and sharing what we learn. And it’s about doing what we’ve always done at SDAR: Constantly innovating to deliver what’s best for you.

An extremely important conversation took place at our Sept. 13 Expo. More than 170 brokers and managers registered for a special panel discussion about “The Future of the MLS.”

Saul Klein, a nationally recognized expert on MLS’s, moderated the session, and the four panelists represented more than 100 years of combined expertise in real estate and the MLS, each bringing a unique perspective. Panelists included Walt Baczkowski (SF Assoc. of REALTORS®), Annie Ives (Combined LA/Westside MLS), Myra Jolivet (MLSListings), and Victor Lund (WAV Group Consulting).

The follow were the most critical areas discussed:

- Data knows no bounds and its full value has yet to be determined
- Agents and brokers want more data outside of their market
- Brokers don’t want to join multiple MLS’s
- Agents and brokers want their data protected

Key areas of consensus by the experts were these:

- Data-sharing accomplishes the objectives of brokers’ access to more data without losing control of their data
- Consolidation risks brokers losing control over their data
- Data has value that we may not yet fully understand, including data derived from data. We shouldn’t surrender our brokers’ data without knowing its worth
- Very large, regional MLS’s lose that “local touch” unless your local association provides a direct connection to the MLS

In summary, the consensus is: Data share trumps consolidation and/or merger of MLS’s.

As we listen, look around, and chart a course towards better, innovative, and world-class MLS you deserve, data sharing is a process that will allow access to listing information outside the boundaries of our MLS, and consolidation/mergers are business decisions with consequences – like giving up control of data.

To repeat the consensus of the panelists: The world of data sharing opens up a myriad of possibilities for MLS’s to provide large geographic areas of data to their subscribers and participants without merging organizations and without transferring data ownership and operational control.

More to come on this. But send us your thoughts to sdarmis@sdar.com.

The MLS Outlook is designed to share relevant trends and issues that could have an impact on your MLS and your business. We will continue to deliver information that answers the questions we are receiving from you, our members... What’s REALLY happening with the MLS in San Diego? What does all this mean for your business? It’s time to join the conversation about your MLS.