

TITLENews

MAY 2021

AMERICAN LAND TITLE ASSOCIATION

A large, diverse crowd of people is arranged on a white background to form the shape of a rolled-up sleeve. The people are of various ages, ethnicities, and are wearing a wide variety of colorful clothing. The sleeve shape is formed by a dense packing of people, with the cuff area being the widest and the opening being the narrowest. The overall image is a high-angle shot, looking down at the crowd.

**'We
Roll Up
Our Sleeves'**

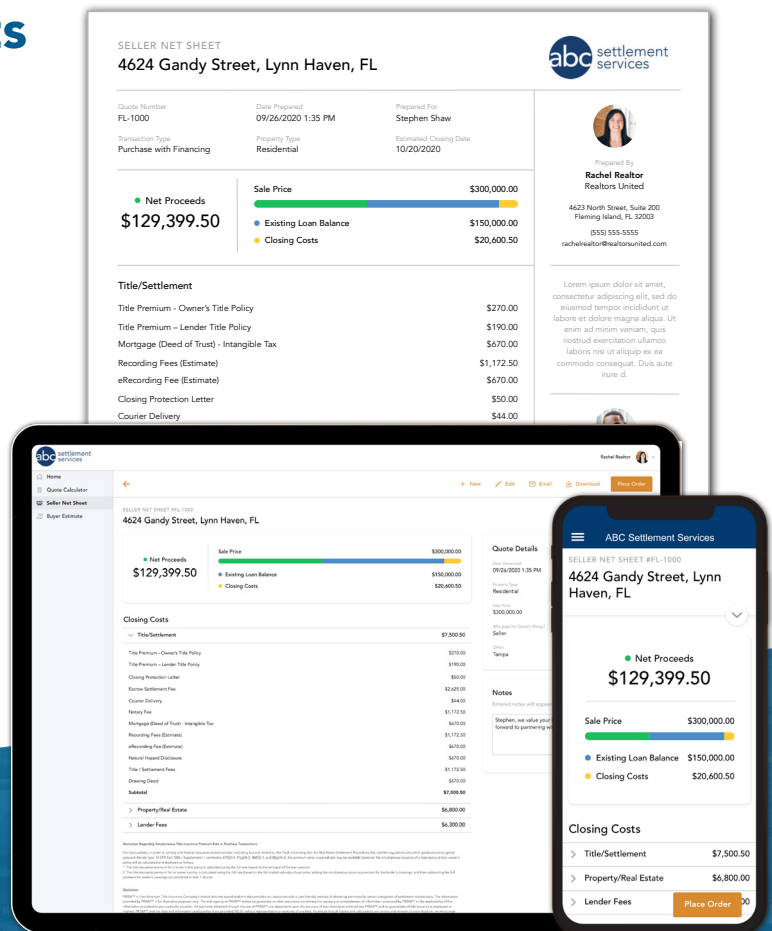
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**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S
DIGITAL ISSUE OF**

TITLENews

The digital edition of **TITLENews** includes a webinar recording that details how the conflicting treatment between federal and state law makes closing transactions involving marijuana money more complex and prone to pitfalls.

Go to alta.org
to get your copy of
Digital TitleNews Today.

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LAND TITLE
ASSOCIATION**



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TITLENews

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Find Your Wright Brothers Moment

ON APRIL 16, NASA REPORTED THAT THE INGENUITY HELICOPTER

successfully completed a historic flight on Mars and safely landed back on the surface. It was the first powered, controlled flight on another planet. The helicopter autonomously flew through the thin Martian atmosphere, with no help from its teams on Earth, gathering data and taking photos and video.

The copter carried a postage-stamp-sized swatch of fabric from wing of the original Wright Flyer aircraft. MiMi Aung, Ingenuity project manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif., called the achievement their "Wright brothers moment on another planet." The feat comes 117 years after the Wright brothers succeeded in making the first flight near Kitty Hawk, N.C., on Dec. 17, 1903.

Despite the success, Aung said they are talking cues from Orville and Wilbur Wright about what to do next. History shows they got right back to work, learning about their aircraft to make it even better.

What's interesting about this is that NASA said the Mars helicopter project went from a "blue sky" feasibility study to workable engineering concept to achieving the first flight on another world in just six years.

Such a quick turnaround for something this monumental made me think of how quickly ALTA created its Good Deeds Foundation. Just months after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ALTA leadership started talking about the concept. In October, the ALTA Good Deeds Foundation launched. Already, title professionals such as yourself have donated more than \$600,000 to help the non-profit support charitable efforts across the country.

As you can read in this edition's cover article, the Foundation initially awarded \$125,000 in grants to 21 organizations. This is just the start and we're excited to see how the Foundation grows and the lives that are impacted.

We know our members make a difference in their communities every day. As we work earnestly to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, communities are more important than ever in all aspects of our lives. That's one of the reasons why ALTA launched a new online community called ALTA Connection to provide a venue for ALTA members to share information and build and expand their networks.

We hope you will share what's happening in your community and company. Let's celebrate victories and troubleshoot challenges. (You can join and learn more at community.altaprofessionals.org.)

Whether it's working to strengthen and improve your community, or helping your customers, find and celebrate your Wright brothers moment.



JEREMY YOHE

ALTA vice president of communications

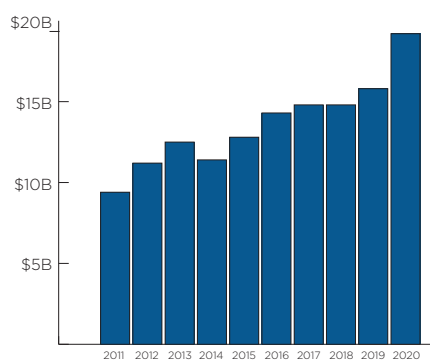
| Title Premium Volume Increases 21.7% in 2020

Driven by historic mortgage origination activity and increased home values, ALTA reported title insurance premium volume increased 21.7 percent during 2020 when compared to 2019.

The title insurance industry generated \$19.2 billion in title insurance premiums during 2020 compared to \$15.8 billion during 2019, according to [ALTA's Market Share Analysis](#).

"At the start of the pandemic in early 2020, it was very a very uncertain time, with few in the industry clear on what the road ahead looked like for the industry and those we serve. As the year progressed, however, the purchase market remained robust alongside strong refinance activity overall, generating significant title insurance premium volume," said Diane Tomb, ALTA's chief executive officer. "We do not expect 2021 will have the same level of refinance activity, but the residential purchase market appears to be holding steady.

TITLE INSURANCE PREMIUM VOLUME



The true test of whether 2020 volume represents a unique event will be whether the historically low inventory of homes for sale continues into the summer."

Overall, total operating income for the industry was up 17.6 percent, operating expenses were up 17.0 percent, and loss and loss adjustment expenses were down 7.9 percent. In 2020, the industry paid more than \$469 million in claims.

Family Market Share (80.8%)

- Fidelity Family, 32.9%
- First American Family, 23.3%
- Old Republic Family, 15.0%
- Stewart Family, 9.6%

Independent Companies (19.2%)

- Westcor Land Title Insurance Co., 5.8%
- WFG National Title Insurance Co., 3.0%
- Title Resources Guaranty Co., 2.5%
- North American Title Insurance Co., 1.8%
- Alliant National Title Insurance Co., 0.9%

Top States

- Texas, \$2.52 billion (+14.0%)
- California, \$2.26 billion (+27.1%)
- Florida, \$1.90 billion (+17.5%)
- New York, \$1.02 billion (-11.0%)
- Pennsylvania, \$826 million (+28.8%)

[Click here](#) for more market share data.

ALTA expects to release Q1 2021 market data around June 1.

| ALTA Joins 30 Organizations in Support of 1031 Exchanges

In letters to congressional leaders and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen, ALTA joined 30 other organizations explaining the importance of 1031 like-kind exchanges.

The letter outlines how 1031 exchanges support jobs and investment, healthy real estate markets, and important social and environmental objectives, such as the preservation of family-owned farms and ranches and the conservation of land for the benefit of the public. Like-kind exchanges under section 1031 of the tax code allow businesses to grow organically, with less unsustainable debt, by reinvesting gains on a tax-deferred basis in new and productive assets. In this way, like-kind exchanges

increase economic opportunities for minority-, veteran- and women-owned businesses and struggling entrepreneurs who may lack access to traditional sources of financing.

"Following years of careful legislating and regulatory rulemaking, section 1031 supports job growth, creates a ladder of economic opportunity for small businesses, cash-poor entrepreneurs, and farm, ranch, and forest owners, and constitutes an important tool for the environmental conservation of land for future generations," the letter said. "For these reasons, like-kind exchanges will have an important role in the economic recovery and beyond."

PARTNERSHIPS **REFRAMED**

Stewart is rethinking the way we do partnerships. Our agents expressed their needs, and we've listened. We've developed better, more efficient solutions, and we've invested in improving our technology integration and our partnerships. This includes launching new tech platforms that help streamline the transaction process and acquiring services that enhance our search products and offerings. Our goal is to make our processes and services more efficient and streamlined, which provides a better experience for your customers and makes your business more profitable. This is the new Stewart. ***Redefined and moving ahead.***

Find out more. Visit stewart.com/tn1.



Marketing for Every Month of the Year

Social media marketing is one of the most direct and cost-effective ways companies can reach consumers and customers. ALTA has created a full year of marketing content for members to use on social media.

The calendar provides a month-by-month plan or can be used à la carte. Each month includes a photo inspiration board that will take you to a stock photography site if you want to purchase images or just need some direction for visuals.

Here's suggested content to target consumers in April:

Week 1

- No mystery here, we provide you peace of mind. Want to know the Who, What, When and Why? [Check out the answers to the most asked questions.](#)
- #titleinsurance
- #wehavetheanswers
- #peaceofmind
- #hereforyou



Week 2

- Don't be afraid of what you can't see. We guard you from the unknown. Check out [our video](#) to see how we



continue to protect even after the closing. #weprotect #dontbescaresd #wehavetheanswers

Week 3

- Owner's title insurance is a smart decision because it's the best way to protect a property from future legal claims. Check out [our video](#) to see how we continue to protect even after the closing. #weprotect #dontbescaresd #wehavetheanswers

Week 4

- Did you know you could be responsible for any legal actions filed against your property before you bought your house? Don't worry, we've got your back. Check out [our video](#) to see how we continue to protect even after the closing. #weprotect #dontbescaresd

Elevate Your Staff With ALTA's New Learning Center

From beginners to experts, everyone on your staff can benefit from ALTA's new Elevate Learning Center. Sponsored by Qualia, Elevate includes six online courses:

- Nuts and Bolts of the Land Title Industry** was designed to be part of employee onboarding.
- Title 101** provides instruction on the basic principles of the title insurance industry.
- Title 201** offers more advanced instruction.
- Understanding Commercial Transactions** equips you with commercial transaction concepts.
- Escrow Accounting Procedures** teaches a model system of

managerial practices.

- Ethics in the Title Industry** addresses title-related ethical issues.

The courses include videos, reading materials, quizzes and/or a resource guide as well as a certificate of completion. ALTA membership provides discounts on these courses, and CE/CLE credits are offered for some of the classes in certain states. Study at your own pace and in your own place!

Learn more at elevate.altatitle.org.

Membership By the Numbers

ALTA is the title insurance and settlement services industry resource for advocacy, education, communications, networking and policy standards. Here's a look at some membership numbers from the past month.

- New Members: 82
- New Associate Members: 7
- New Attorney Members: 37
- State with the most new members: FL with 20
- Total Members: 5,592



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SEA *to* SHINING SEA

No matter where you are, the FNF Family of Companies is here for you. But our approach in every market is a bit different. Our state and local people know what their customers need, and we're excited to spend 2021 unveiling upgraded state and local websites that highlight what makes each area so special.





‘We Roll Up Our Sleeves’

ALTA Good Deeds Foundation Awards \$125K in Grants to Charities Supported by Members

NESTLED AT THE FOOT of the Bighorn Mountains, Sheridan, Wyo., is a small community with a population of roughly 18,000. Fortunate to have a large veteran healthcare facility, the area is a magnet for military veterans from a multi-state region. This brings challenges as there were at least 70 homeless veterans as of January.

To help combat the problem, AMNAC's Veteran Village project plans to build 50 tiny homes, each equipped with common necessities, like a kitchen, bathroom and laundry. A communal building will house another kitchen, living space, and physical and mental health services for veterans. The ultimate goal is to help veterans find purpose in their lives outside of the military by integrating themselves back into the community through work and volunteering a minimum of five hours per week.



When Sasha Johnston, president of Sheridan County Title Insurance Agency, learned about the project, she jumped at the opportunity to get involved.

"My life has been shaped by the sacrifices that veterans have made and the issues that plague them long after they return to civilian life," said Johnston, who has several family members who served in the military. "AMNACS is an organization dedicated to providing housing, but more importantly, to providing a meaningful life to veterans."

In March, AMNACS was among 20 organizations nominated by ALTA members that each received a \$6,000 grant from the ALTA Good Deeds Foundation. ALTA members long have been active in their neighborhoods, not only protecting

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homebuyers, but also supporting local charitable efforts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, title professionals across the United States stepped up to help their neighbors, customers and local communities. It became clear that ALTA could amplify its members' efforts and their stories. To do this, the association in

2020 launched its Foundation dedicated to empowering members to give back in the areas they serve.

"The Foundation's mission centers on the idea that 'good deeds grow communities,'" said Foundation Board Chair Mary O'Donnell, president and CEO of Westcor Land Title Insurance Co. "The stories of these organizations and the ALTA members who support them were incredibly moving and telling of our industry's commitment to strengthening local communities."

The ALTA Good Deeds Foundation provides charitable grants to 501(c)(3) organizations supported by ALTA members. Grants are awarded to local organizations through a competitive application process completed by an ALTA member, highlighting how the member is furthering Our Values through charitable efforts.

"I am incredibly proud of the efforts of our ALTA members who work to support these charities as well as those who donated so much to the Foundation," said ALTA CEO Diane Tomb, Foundation Board member. "Title insurance professionals work daily to protect homebuyers and every community across the country, so it's no surprise to see them lifting others in times of need. Good deeds are woven into the fabric of who they are. I am excited to see the growth of the Foundation in 2021."

In all, the ALTA Good Deeds Foundation awarded \$125,000 during its first round of giving. An additional \$5,000 emergency grant was given to the Harper

'WE ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES'

Volunteer Fire Department in Harper, Texas, to help fund the crisis response arising from the February 2021 severe winter storm.

O'Donnell presented the grant to ALTA member Aaron Davis, CEO of Florida Agency Network, who took a leave of absence from his business to volunteer in Harper. The winter storms created a power crisis in Texas, leaving more than 4.5 million homes and businesses without power.

"I just never imagined snow and ice could cause this much damage," Davis said. "They were without power, running out of food and water and freezing. The Harper Volunteer Fire Department didn't have plumbing supplies, tape, putty, glue, tools or chainsaws to be able to fix anything or help the community."

In addition to cutting down tree limbs and clearing brush, Davis also dedicated his time to fundraising for the fire department. In addition to the Foundation donation, Davis raised more than \$60,000 overall.

"One of the reasons we started the ALTA Good Deeds

Foundation was not only to support charities ALTA members support around the country but, in times of crisis, to see if there was anything else we could do to help," O'Donnell said. "Aaron's efforts are really indicative of the professionals in the title insurance industry. When things are down, we jump in and help."

"We roll up our sleeves and just get it done, don't we?" Davis said. "This 'deed good doing' is incredible to see, and I can't thank the ALTA Good Deeds Foundation enough."

Housing was a common thread of most of the groups the Foundation supported. One of the many inspirational stories shared the efforts of Traci Strickland and her work for the Kanawha Valley Collective in Chesterfield, Va., which focuses on preventing homelessness.

Years ago, Strickland helped a man living on the streets secure a furnished apartment. She visited the man the following week. He invited her to have some toast. She declined. The man responded by saying he could have toast anytime he wanted now. That stayed

Good Deeds Grow Communities:

2nd Harvest

Spokane, Wash

Mission: Fighting hunger, feeding hope: Second Harvest brings community resources together to feed people in need through empowerment, education and partnerships.

Impact on local community: 2nd Harvest, through its Bite2Go program, provides week-end food kits to thousands of local school students who are food insecure. Out of more than 130 schools in Spokane County, the organization only has nine schools left that do not have a sponsor for kids who need food security help each weekend.

"Many kids in our community rely on the food they receive for breakfast and lunch at their local school as the most reliable meals they get during the week. This means they often don't have food over the weekend during the school year. They really do go hungry each weekend."

—Anthony Carollo | CEO | Vista Title & Escrow

AMNACS Veteran Village

Sheridan, Wyo.

Mission: Provide opportunities and stability to homeless veterans and veterans in need in Sheridan County by building a veteran home community with support services and potential employment opportunities.

Impact on local community: AMNACS Veteran Village wants to change how veterans live and view life by building 50 tiny homes, each

equipped with common necessities, like a kitchen, bathroom and laundry. A communal building will house another kitchen, living space, and physical and mental health services for veterans.

"I am proud of the people who have stepped up to tackle these issues in a responsible, loving and patriotic way. I

love that AMNACS formed to take on this enormous endeavor, to lead the charge to ending veteran homelessness and despair, to prevent veteran suicide, treat veterans with dignity and benefit our community by allowing them to feel a part of it."

—Sasha Johnston | President |
Sheridan County Title Insurance Agency



Vista Title & Escrow employees help distribute food at Stevens Elementary.

with Strickland, because when people stay in a shelter, you eat when and what people tell you.

"I immediately changed my answer and responded that I would be honored to have some toast with him," Strickland said. "I will tell you now, it was the best toast I have ever had. I often tell the toast story because I think it sums up the reason we do what we do."

Hitting closer to the title industry, First American Title Co. formed a partnership with H.O.M.E.S Inc. to target youth who have aged out of foster care and offer them training, mentoring and a career path. The program offers four months of paid training that can lead to full-time employment in Florida for title examiner positions.

"First American is taking charge by targeting an at-risk population in our community, offering a training and work opportunity for those ready and willing to meet the challenge," said Michael Abbey, senior vice president for First American Title Co. "Many of these young people have been residents in an affordable

self-sufficiency program. They now have stable housing, are working on their educations and our goal is to meet them at the point of filling that employment gap by offering an opportunity to earn a living wage and enter into a career that will serve them well" ■

Donate to the ALTA Good Deeds Foundation and Help Us, Help Communities

The ALTA Good Deeds Foundation is registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization founded by ALTA to support member companies' charitable efforts as they work to strengthen their communities. To learn more or donate, go to altagooddeeds.org



A Look at the 20 Organizations

Be A Blessing Birmingham

Birmingham, Ala.

Mission: Bring awareness to and garner community support for the homeless community in Greater Birmingham, Ala.

Impact on local community: A current project is a mobile shower to assist the homeless with hygiene. The group is gathering funds to buy a vehicle to move the shower from place to place to serve a larger portion of the homeless community.

"Erica Robbins, the founder of the organization, is a champion for a group of people who are largely invisible to most of us as we go about our daily lives. It is remarkable to see her move among the members of the Birmingham homeless community as if they are her family."

—Amye von Seebach | President | TitleSouth LLC

Burlington Recreation Commission

Burlington, N.D.

Mission: Provide and promote recreational and educational activities and opportunities for the youth in our community and surrounding areas.

Impact on local community: This organization is the only one that provides summer activities for the children in the community. Between 500-600 youngsters aged 3 to 18 participate in the programs, which include T-ball, softball, baseball and other activities.

"Since our inception in 1981, literally thousands of kids have grown up playing at

our park. It has been wonderful to see the next generation of kids coming through now. Our park is the central point of our evening activities."

—Paula Bachmeier | Senior Vice President | North Dakota Guaranty & Title Co.



Paula Bachmeier holds the check from the ALTA Good Deeds Foundation.

Caring Cupboard LLC

Pasadena, Md.

Mission: Try to ensure that no citizen, and especially children, suffers from food insecurity or hygiene issues of any kind and for any reason through providing food and basic necessities.

Impact on local community: They have cupboards located in 10 schools in Anne Arundel

County, Md. They also have 10 Little Free Pantries—like a Little Free Library, but with food—in various locations across the county. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Caring Cupboard has fed over 11,000 families.

"A child's ability to concentrate, and therefore learn, is greatly impacted when they do not have access to food. For children to learn and thrive, they need to be properly fed. Caring Cupboard has had a tremendous impact in feeding families both before and during this pandemic."

—Susan Coakley | Underwriting and Claims Counsel | Security Title Guarantee Corporation of Baltimore

GRACE in Action

Washington, D.C.

Mission: Provide housing as a first step toward rebuilding security, safety and dignity for our unhoused neighbors in the southeast quadrant of Washington, D.C.

Impact on local community: GRACE in Action is working to acquire housing units and make them available for affordable rents for those in the community who are experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity. Their focus is on those who are falling between the cracks of the current social service systems.

"GRACE in Action is a leader in the community, demonstrating how a committed group of community residents can come together to tackle the larger challenge of homelessness. They have achievable plans in place to add affordable and ethically

'WE ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES'

maintained housing units to my community. ALTA's contribution to GRACE in Action will have a concrete and direct impact on affordable housing in my community."

—Katie Griffin | Settlement Attorney | KVS Title

Greenhouse17

Lexington, Ky.

Mission: Nurture the lives of those abused by their partners by providing 24-hour crisis intervention, emergency shelter, support groups, legal advocacy and housing assistance.

Impact on local community: This organization and facility is the only one of its type in the community, serving 17 counties.

"Often survivors have to leave a home quickly and leave with few belongings and this organization provides a safe place to stay, keeping them with their children and making provisions for whatever necessities they may need. This organization dreams big and allows both survivors and members of the community to bring new ideas. They react well to fluctuating circumstances, maintaining services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic."

—Sharon Crissey | Owner | All Kentucky Title LLC

H.O.M.E.S. INC.

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Mission: Provide quality community and economic development benefiting at-risk/disadvantaged lower-income Broward County residents and neighborhoods.

Impact on local community: The organization has served the low-income residents and neighborhoods of Broward County for 22 years. Over the past 12 years, the group has partnered with other nonprofits to provide more than 200 homes to first-time buyers.

"We are currently in a strategic employability skills partnership with the Off the Ground Program. This program offers a four-month paid training opportunity. The goal is to virtually interact with a class of 20 participants referred by this continuum of care for youth aged out of foster and relative care."

—Michael Abbey | Senior Vice President | First American Title Co.

Habitat for Humanity — Coastal Fairfield Chapter

Bridgeport, Conn.

Mission: Bring people together to build homes, communities and hope. Creating a world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Impact on local community: Since 1985, this Habitat for Humanity chapter has built or

rehabbed 266 homes, helping over 1,000 family members in Fairfield County, Conn. It completed five homes in 2020.

"My company has worked with Habitat CFC for the past 15 years providing title searches and title insurance products and services. Homeownership provides a path to stability, better health and stronger communities."

—Robert Picone | New York State Manager | CATIC

Hamilton Families

San Francisco, Calif.

Mission: Offers programs to prevent homelessness, provide shelter and stability, return families to permanent housing and support the well-being of children experiencing homelessness.

Impact on local community: Hamilton Families ended homelessness for nearly 240 families last year and 25% of families who were successfully housed remained in San Francisco. Ninety families sleep in one of their residential programs each night.

"For years, Hamilton Families has inspired me and thousands of others in the Bay Area with their work ensuring that families have a home."

—Matt Kaufman | Vice President of Marketing | Qualia

sitioning out of the shelter or off the street into housing with enough household items for the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen to get them re-established.

"Traci (Strickland) is my superhero and cousin, and also the executive director of the Kanawha Valley Collective. She works tirelessly to prevent and end homelessness. I believe in her mission and see how driven she is to ensure that people are loved, respected and safe because they exist, no questions asked."

—Tamara Strickland | Vice President, Digital Transformation | Fidelity National Financial

Operation America Standing In Support (OASIS)

Merritt Island, Fla.

Mission: Improve the morale of troops currently deployed, serving our country at war, in the form of themed packages and card-writing campaigns.

Impact on local community: The organization has developed six themed campaigns throughout the year, sending packages to soldiers on Valentine's Day, Easter, Independence Day, Halloween, Veterans Day and Christmas.

"Our troops bear one of the most solemn responsibilities in our nation, a duty they



Kanawha Valley Collective

Charleston, W.Va.

Mission: A collaborative network dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness so everyone in the community has a safe, stable place to call home.

Impact on local community: The organization supplies homeless individuals and families tran-

could not, and would not, leave for others to assume. Certainly, serving them is the highest honor and responsibility all of us could have in our lives, an honor we will carry with us and treasure for eternity."

—Tess Brady Heribacka | Member Account Advisor | Attorneys Title Fund Services

Owen J. Roberts Education Foundation

Pottstown, Pa.

Mission: Engage all members of the community to support educational innovation and the mission of the Owen J. Roberts School District.

Impact on local community: A rural area with no town center, the school is the regional institution that binds the community. Classroom grants have assisted with purchases of technology, adaptive learning equipment, STEM materials, live presentations and even ukuleles.

"As a graduate of the school district, I take great pride in knowing that the students of our community are being offered innovative educational opportunities through our program funding. A good school district helps to build value in its homes and real estate."

—Danielle Ewing | Regional HR Director/
Agency Operations Manager |
Fidelity National Title Insurance Co.

Rebuilding Together North Central Florida Inc.

Gainesville, Fla.

Mission: Repairing homes, revitalizing communities and rebuilding lives.

Impact on local community: The organization utilizes local connections to preserve homes on average for less than \$12,000, which is extremely cost-effective in comparison to the construction of a new affordable unit at a minimum of \$150,000 each. In 2020, they provided critical and emergency services (such as fixing broken water heaters and nonfunctional plumbing systems) to 30 families.

"Rebuilding Together is dedicated to collaborative work that will lead to real solutions for real people facing health and safety challenges due to the state or cost of housing."

—Crystal Curran | Title Agent | Alachua Title Services

Revive South Jersey

Bridgeton, N.J.

Mission: Combat community deterioration and transform the lives of individuals and families in South Jersey by meeting their housing, physical and spiritual needs, and strengthening their family units.

Impact on local community: On a monthly basis, 60-70 families receive life coaching to help them set and reach goals in finance, health and wellness, relationships and educational advocacy. Over the past three years, the team has been able to help nine families achieve their goal of homeownership.

"I believe homeownership is the pathway to more stability in our area, better quality of life

for the families and the community overall—this exemplifies just part of what Revive South Jersey does for the local community."

—Carolyn King | President | Dominion Title Services

Ronald McDonald House of Cleveland

Cleveland, Ohio

Mission: Enhance the healthcare experience for families and children through comfort care and supportive services.

Impact on local community: This organization not only supports families traveling from other states and countries but also helps the local community. RMH is a one-stop-shop, delivering critical services to all who need them.

"RMH Cleveland delivers a sense of normalcy during very difficult times for the parents, siblings, and most importantly, the children seeking treatment. Our fondness for this organization goes far beyond any other charity we support because we have experienced the magic that happens at the hospitals and within that house."

—Glen Stout | State Agency Manager | North
American Title Insurance Co.

Spare Key

St. Paul, Minn.

Mission: Assist families in crisis with critically ill or seriously injured family members with housing grants, payment assistance, engaged resource referral and advocacy assistance.

Impact on local community: Since 1997, Spare Key has served over 4,000 families with more than \$4 million in financial assistance. The organization provides an annual scholarship to a local Minnesota college and hosts a basketball tournament with the Harlem Wizards.

"Spare Key has made a huge impact on thousands of families locally. They are unique in that they do not have income eligibility requirements and do not make a distinction between any type of illness or injury."

—Barbara Rodriguez | President | Network Title Inc.

The Baldrick Group Nonprofit LLC, dba "The Columbus Project"

Columbus, Ohio

Mission: Create affordable housing from neglected, abandoned homes and to make a meaningful impact on the health, life and safety of those living in impoverished neighborhoods in Columbus and central Ohio.

Impact on local community: Repairing or rebuilding an abandoned or neglected house has a major impact on a neighborhood. It affects the well-being of the neighbors, the block, and

the community. Property values go up and crime goes down.

"I support the organization because it is a grassroots organization that is not affiliated with the major commercial developers who are moving affordable housing out of 'desirable' neighborhoods and into impoverished and sometimes abandoned neighborhoods. The Columbus Project takes a different approach and views the housing it creates to be an important step in lifting people out of poverty and back into financial stability and growth."

—Ken Donchatz | Processor | Apex Title Agency

The Literacy Center

Bluffton, S.C.

Mission: Serves the community's social and economic needs through empowering adults to become proficient in English.

Impact on local community: The Literacy Center provides literacy services to about 500 adults annually. Last year students represented 27 countries and spoke 10 different languages. Students completed 23,000+ classroom hours, had a 70% retention rate and 65% post-tested with at least one educational level gain.

"My law partner and wife, Meredith, share TLC's mission and community impact with colleagues, friends and family. The American Dream is possible for these good people and their families."

—James Bannon | Attorney | Bannon Law Firm

William Michael Stromsodt Memorial Foundation (WMS Memorial Foundation)

Fisher, Minn.

Mission: Support the betterment of the community by providing opportunities to individuals and groups through actions and works of a religious, charitable, scientific, literary and educational nature.

Impact on local community: Partnered with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to provide this program to children and families in Fisher, Minn. The WMS Memorial Foundation promotes the program, enrolls children, and covers the monthly book and mailing costs of the Imagination Library.

"I am passionate about supporting the William Michael Stromsodt Memorial Foundation as it is the local champion providing Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in the community. The WMS Memorial Foundation believes in the importance of reading with young children, and making sure all children, regardless of income, have access to age-appropriate books in their home."

—Nicholas Stromsodt | Partner/Attorney/
Title Agent | Neil Law Firm

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Beware of the Switchtask Thief

Have you heard of switchtasking? Whether or not you have, you've likely done it. In fact, you're probably doing it right now. You're reading this article, and an alert from Outlook, Slack or Microsoft Teams appeared on your screen, or a text message appeared on your phone. Do you read it? If you read it, you are switchtasking. Simultaneously talking on the phone, writing an email and answering a text from a family member all while working on a deadline-driven project is often referred to as multitasking. However, according to American author **Dave Crenshaw**, it is actually switchtasking, and it can be detrimental to work and productivity levels.

“We are confused about whether or not we’re being productive. And the reality is, your brain cannot handle multiple active tasks at the same time.”

Crenshaw introduced the term switchtasking in his book, “The Myth of Multitasking: How Doing It All Gets Nothing Done,” and said it’s a better way to describe what is occurring when people attempt to multitask, or rather when they attempt to concentrate on more than one thing.

“We are confused about whether or not we’re being productive. And the reality is, your brain cannot handle multiple active tasks at the same time. You have to switch back and forth ... and every time you switch, you pay a cost,” said Crenshaw, who is a public speaker and time management expert.

During a recent webinar by Lucid Software on how to avoid remote working fatigue, Crenshaw listed increased time, lower quality and higher stress as the costs, and shared tips on improving productivity levels during the workday by avoiding switchtasking.

To prove how negatively impactful switchtasking is, Crenshaw gave the audience a task. The audience had to write on a piece of paper, “switchtasking is a thief” on one line as one task and the numbers 1-21 on a second line as another task.

When doing these two tasks separately, the audience could do each faster than they did when they attempted to switch between the two tasks. For example, when writing “s, 1, w, 2, i, 3, t, 4, c, 5, h, 6, etc.,” on the separate lines, switching back and forth between the phrase and numbers, many in the audience claimed it took longer, and they made mistakes and were more stressed in completing the two tasks.

“If [you] can reduce the number of switches, you’re going to get more time, you’re going to improve the quality of your work and you’re going to reduce your stress levels,” Crenshaw said.

In its newly-released, “The Title Agent’s Guide to Working Remote,” NATIC offers the title agent community a full-service, how-to-guide to working remote, including: Tips from Crenshaw on how to reduce switchtasking and increase productivity levels; professional insight from NATIC’s senior vice president of agency, **Rich Griffin**, on time management; and dispelling the myths of remote work, overcoming the remote struggles, managing a remote workforce, collaboration tools, benefits to working remote, workspace considerations, remote security, company policy and remote training.

View NATIC's
The Title Agent's Guide to
Working Remote HERE.



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Take Your Business to the Next Level

ALTA SPRINGBOARD Helps Industry **LEVEL UP**



With the country still contending with the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 350 attendees participated in the virtual 2021 ALTA SPRINGBOARD to learn new ways to tackle problems.

Some highlights of the Ideas Festivals included a former Disney exec talking about fostering an environment of innovation, the founder of women's clothing brand GRAVITAS sharing why you've got to bet on yourself every day, and a world-renown master marketer offering tips on how to create a memorable campaign.

Eight career advancement talks



covered topics ranging from finding work-life balance and selfcare to building your personal brand and women in leadership.

In addition to informative sessions, participants were able to make new connections with the Networking Roulette, one-on-one meetings where you're randomly paired with another attendee, and Braindates, which provided opportunities to schedule one-on-one or group conversations.

Get Your Amazing Alpha by Being Playful

The word "Disney" conjures images of talking mice, fairytale castles and, best of all, magic. But we all know Disney magic isn't invoked through spells or enchantments; it is forged through innovation.

As the former vice president of innovation and creativity at The Walt Disney Co., Duncan Wardle knows a thing or two about fostering an environment of innovation. Innovation, he said, is not something that happens by chance. It is the result of building an environment in which it can thrive.

However, cultivating creativity and innovation is even more difficult when your staff is working remotely or behind closed doors because of a worldwide pandemic. Speaking during a session sponsored by SoftPro, Wardle shared steps and strategies to encourage an innovative culture that unlocks employees' ability to let their ingenuity run wild.

Wardle said leaders should create safe spaces for staff to take creative risks and empower their team to transition ideas into action.

Mindfulness

Wardle said minds are busy during normal days. People don't typically develop creative ideas while working. More often, inspiration strikes while you're exercising or waking up. He compared this to when you're in an argument with someone. It's not until after the argument when you think of a perfect one-liner response. "You gave yourself time to think," Wardle said. "But how



do you get there on demand?"

Mindfulness opens the door and allows people to get to the "amazing alpha" state where "you get there by being playful."

"When you don't have time to think, the door to your unconscious brain is closed," Wardle said. "Then you only have access to 13 percent of your brain."

Devoting time to mindfulness gets people out of their "rivers of thinking" that keep them stuck in their current processes. Leaving the "river of thinking" can mean challenging the common rules. That's how people like Netflix's Reed Hastings turned the Blockbuster model on its head, Wardle said.

Disney's What If

Companies and their employees are constrained by their own

expertise and experience. Their thinking is also restricted by the organization's established rules. All too often, we hear "That's the way we do it here!"

An innovation tool that Wardle likes is called "what if." He encouraged attendees to list all the rules of the industry and ask "What if this rule no longer applied?"

Wardle shared a story about a British company that makes drinking glasses. The company noticed a percentage of its inventory was breaking during packaging. To address the problem, the company listed the packaging steps, but then took a "what if" approach. An employee suggested they hire blind people to handle packaging. The change drastically improved packaging and government ended up giving them a payroll subsidy for hiring the blind.

At Disney, Wardle and his team were asked to develop a "game changer" idea for Walt Disney World. One of the rules they addressed was, "I have to stand in line." This is one of the biggest pain points and led to the question "What if there were no lines?" So, they created the Disney Magic Band, where guests can use to reserve their favorite attractions, shows, and character meet and greets in advance of their visit. The Magic Band acts as a room key, eliminating the need to stand in line to check in. Swipe the band at the entrance to the parks or reserved park experiences and avoid the lines there, too. Touch an item of merchandise and it's paid for and delivered to a guest's hotel room. Order food on a smartphone and have it delivered to the guest's table on arrival at the restaurant.

"The average guest now has plenty of free time to spend with their family," Wardle said. "And what do people do with their free time? They spend money."

Employable Skill Set

He concluded by encouraging attendees to remain curious and to get fresh motivation.

"Many of you order the same type of food and sleep on the same side of the bed," Wardle said. "Take time for fresh stimulus in your lives."

He said to think about the advancements and opportunities made possible with artificial intelligence. While many fear it, Wardle said to embrace it. How will we compete with robots? Through creativity, intuition, curiosity and imagination, he said.

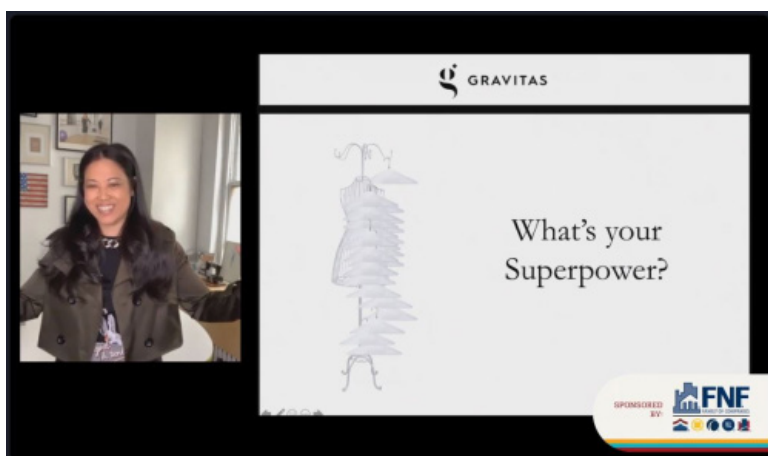
"The four traits you were born with—creativity, imagination, curiosity and intuition—will not be programmed into artificial intelligence any time in the next decade," Wardle said. "These are the four most employable skill sets. The biggest barrier is we don't

have time to think. There is no present like the time. Give yourselves time to think."

What's Your Superpower?

What would happen if you let go of fear, got off the sidelines, and jumped boldly into the game of life? Lisa Sun, founder and CEO of GRAVITAS, unpacked the vital question in a moving, motivating and empowering talk during an Ideas Festival sponsored by the FNF Family of Companies.

Sun explored why it's vital to push past your potential and how to transform an idea into a movement. She encouraged the virtual attendees to



harness their "superpower" to advance personally and professionally.

After spending 11 years at McKinsey & Company, Sun took some time off, traveled around the world and spent time with her parents in Taiwan.

"The last two weeks of time off, my mom goes, 'Home is nice, but you can't live here,'" Sun said. "My mom encouraged me to bet on myself and start a business."

The origin of Sun's company started with her first professional review while at McKinsey & Company. Sun was told she "comes across as young and overly enthusiastic at times," that she "lacked gravitas" and "should go buy a new dress, big jewelry and great shoes." With those words in mind, an understanding of the transformative power of clothing and a determination to create a game-changing company, Sun filed for a global patent to build shapewear directly into dresses. She launched GRAVITAS as a "confidence company" that offers innovative apparel and styling solutions designed to makeover women from the

inside-out.

“Remind yourself every day that you’re capable,” she said. “When I founded GRAVITAS out of my one bedroom, I believed I could provide confidence to others.”

For Sun, fashion is about embracing strength. She shared a story about a woman working at GRAVITAS’ call center who was going through a divorce. The woman’s son was graduating from high school and needed a dress. Sun ended up going to D.C. to help the employee find a dress.

“The dressing room is an analogy for our life,” Sun said. “Every woman sets themselves up to fail even before getting into a dressing room. We are focused on the negatives. We need to focus on what we want to accomplish and focus on what we like.”

To help make the connection, Sun asked SPRINGBOARD attendees to think about their superpower—not what they’re good at, but best at.

“Why do we care about superpowers?” Sun asked. “Because when hard times hit, that’s what you draw upon. Superpowers are the bedrock as we pivot and move forward with purpose.”

“Document your superpowers and your team’s superpowers. That will give you insight in why you succeeded the past year or highlight where you struggled.”

Creating Business Rock Stars

From Oreos to Gatorade, Bonin Bough is the genius behind the rapid growth of some of the world’s most-loved brands across the country. During an Ideas Festival sponsored by CoreLogic, the award-winning marketing executive provided tips to help companies create their own breakthrough “communications experience.”

The former chief media officer of Mondelez International, Bough also is an author and host of CNBC’s “Cleveland Hustles.” He is an inductee of the Advertising Hall of Achievement and can be found on lists such as Fortune’s “40 under 40,” Fast Company’s 100 Most Creative People in Business and Ebony’s Power 10.

Bough discussed how this generation is the most distracted in history. Because of this, text marketing has emerged as a popular and effective digital marketing trend. Most consumers prefer texting with businesses, and text messages are 35 times more likely to be read than emails.

Even churches have caught on, as Bough shared

a sign that read, “Honk if you love Jesus. Text while driving if you want to meet him.”

One vital investment companies should focus on is talent. Bough said people are more important for growth versus data or technology.

“Talent is the single largest determinant for growth of any organization. But what has happened is that every time there has been a change—technology or consumer—there’s training to learn about the technologies.”

Companies are always trying to find the next rock star and want an immediate solution to a problem.



Unfortunately, companies often don’t look internally.

“The silver bullets are the people working at your organization today,” according to Bonin.

He said companies need to build a culture where people believe they are rock stars. This starts by developing organizational learning—the process of creating, retaining and transferring knowledge within a company. This can drive the cultural impact a company wants, according to Bough.

“Showcase talented people and give them the credit they deserve for successes,” he added.

Bough shared a story of how Oreo had become irrelevant because advertising remained the same for decades. While there were many moving parts, he said a Facebook campaign suggested by a novice marketer provide to be a game-changer for the cookie company.

“Allow people the space and culture to know that failure is part of the journey,” Bough said. “Encourage them to be their own entrepreneurs. Small changes can have a significant impact on a large organization.”

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Bipartisan Cannabis Bills Introduced in Senate, House

ALTA Supports Legislation That Clarifies Compliance

Two important bills were introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives that would provide needed protection to title and settlement services companies when handling transactions involving cannabis businesses. ALTA supports efforts to clarify compliance for businesses that provide services to the growing cannabis industry.

In the House, the bipartisan Secure and Fair Enforcement (SAFE) Banking Act of 2021 was reintroduced. The bill prevents federal regulators from taking enforcement actions against financial institutions and insurance companies that do business with the cannabis industry in states where it is legal. It also provides protection from prosecution for handling cannabis funds. The goal of the bill is to move those businesses away from cash and into the banking system. It has broad support from the financial services industry.

The bill was introduced by Rep. Ed Perlmutter (D-Colo.), sponsored by U.S. Reps. Nydia M. Velázquez (D-N.Y.), Steve Stivers (R-Ohio) and Warren Davidson (R-Ohio) and co-sponsored by more than 100 members. (UPDATE: In April, the House passed the SAFE Act by a vote of 321-101. [Click here](#) to read more.)

"The genie is out of the bottle and has been for many years," Congressman Perlmutter said. "Thousands of employees and businesses across this country have been forced to deal in piles of cash for far too long, and it is the responsibility of Congress to step up and take action to align federal and state laws for the safety of our constituents and communities. The public safety need is urgent, and a public health and economic need has also emerged with the pandemic further exacerbating the cash-only problem for the industry. In many states, the industry was deemed essential yet forced to continue to operate in all cash, adding a significant public health risk for businesses and their workers. As we begin our economic recovery, allowing cannabis businesses to access the banking system would also mean an influx of cash into the economy and the opportunity to create good-paying jobs."

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Bob Menendez introduced the Clarifying Law Around Insurance of Marijuana (CLAIM) Act of 2021. The bill, cosponsored by Sens. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), ensures legal marijuana and related businesses have

access to comprehensive and affordable insurance coverage.

The CLAIM Act ensures businesses operating under state laws that have legalized recreational or medical marijuana have access to insurance products such as worker's compensation, property, casualty and title insurance. Because they could be prosecuted or face penalties under federal law, these state-authorized cannabis businesses are often denied access to the insurance market leaving them vulnerable and risking the safety of employees, customers and the community. Businesses can also be denied bank financing if they do not have the proper insurance.

"Current federal law prevents these small business owners from getting insurance coverage, and without it, they can't protect their property, employees or customers," Sen. Mendez said. "Our legislation simply levels the playing field for legal cannabis businesses, allowing them to fully operate just as any other legal small business would by permitting insurance companies to provide coverage to these enterprises without risk of federal prosecution or other unintended consequences."

There are now 15 states, two territories and Washington, D.C., that have legalized marijuana for recreational use, while 34 states and two territories allow medical marijuana. While more states are legalizing the use of cannabis, the federal government still categorizes marijuana as a controlled substance. Because marijuana is illegal under federal law, the title industry faces several challenges and significant risk when handling transactions involving money associated with cannabis.

ALTA support efforts to clarify compliance under state and federal laws for businesses that facilitate transfer and sale of real estate that could be used in growing, storing or selling of cannabis.

Over the last few years, ALTA has worked closely with sponsors to broaden the bill to protect insurance companies and settlement providers. This includes securing a provision that protects cannabis business service providers, including title and settlement companies, by insulating the proceeds of cannabis businesses from criminal or civil forfeiture. It also includes broadening the protections of the bill to provide a safe harbor for the insurance business.



Blend to Acquire Title365 from Mr. Cooper Group in \$500M Deal

Title365 Founded in 2009

Digital lending software company Blend has entered into a definitive agreement with Mr. Cooper Group to acquire Title365 in a deal valued at near \$500 million.

Pursuant to the terms of the transaction, Blend will acquire Title365 for approximately \$500 million, minus \$31 million in adjustments and a 9.9 percent ownership interest retained by Mr. Cooper Group. The transaction is subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions and is expected to close in the second quarter of 2021.

"Since its inception, Blend has been on a mission to create a simpler, more transparent, more accessible financial services ecosystem with the power to help more people reach their financial goals, like purchasing a home," said Blend co-founder and CEO Nima Ghamsari. "Title and settlement are manual, time-consuming processes for consumers and lenders, and by bringing all parties into the same automated platform, we can vastly improve the experience. With an intense focus on its customers and operational efficiency, Title365 is the right match to help us scale our efforts and make an immediate impact in that space."

Blend's work to build a single, cloud-based platform to power the full consumer homebuying journey began in 2018 with the launch of its homeowner's insurance offering. In 2020, the company launched its digital closing solution, Blend Close, which is used by lenders such as U.S. Bank, BMO Harris Bank, First Horizon Bank and Nationwide Mortgage Bankers.

According to a release, Blend said adding Title365 will result in a digital homebuying journey that drives efficiency and cost savings for all parties by integrating title and settlement into the loan process. The Title365 team, which President Kristen Estrella will continue to lead across its U.S. and India offices, will join Blend once the acquisition closes.

"Traditionally, purchasing a home has been riddled with various complexities, requiring many steps and third-party participants," Estrella said. "We're thrilled to be joining forces with Blend to continue the great work Title365 has already done. Together we have the power to simplify the process for real estate agents, lenders and servicers, insurers and others, by leveraging our industry expertise to offer a seamless experience for consumers."

Title365, which was founded in 2009 by a group of settlement service veterans to offer a combination of centralized product fulfillment, including title, escrow and default services, is a division of Xome, a real estate services company providing integrated end-to-end solutions. In 2014, Solutionstar Holdings LLC, an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of Nationstar Mortgage Holdings, purchased Title365 for \$36 million. In 2017, Stewart Information Services acquired the retail branch division of Title365 Company. Title365's retail division operates primarily in Southern California.

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Getting Online Reviews While Your Business Is Hot Will Help You When the Market Is Not

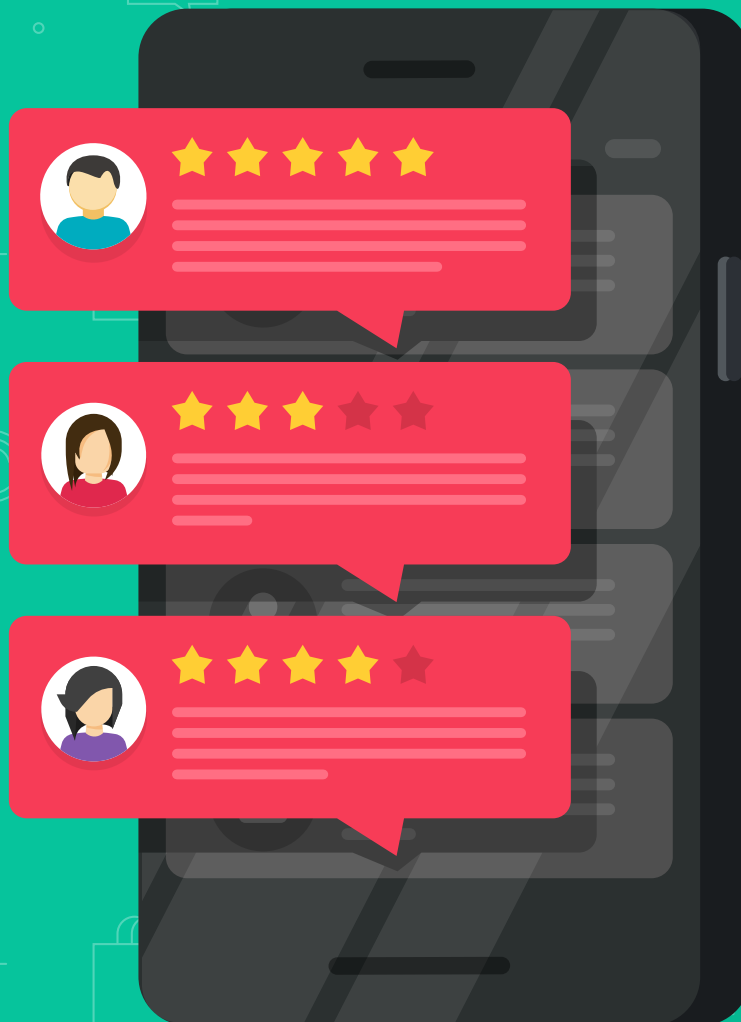
By Eliot Dill

If you have been in business for any amount of time, you have probably noticed that most markets tend to be cyclical and require some evolution to survive.

A company that was once king often must adapt to stay relevant.

For instance, Sears used to be the 800-pound gorilla of retail, then along came Walmart, and now we have Amazon.

Where did Sears go? (I loved their catalog when I was a kid.)



The Power of Online Reviews

What you may not know is that online reviews are quickly becoming one of the most effective ways to market your business.

It boils down to which company builds trust fastest, and online reviews on platforms like Facebook and Google do just that.

In fact, online reviews are so powerful that 79% of consumers trust an [online review](#) as much as a personal recommendation, according to Local Consumer Review Survey.

When you are busy, it is very easy to not focus on getting feedback or reviews from your clients or customers—after all, you’ve got lots of other things to do. However, I hope to convince you that this may be a shortsighted perspective.

Here are the three main reasons why you should focus some time and attention on online reviews while your business is thriving. If you wait, you’ll be too late.

1. Online reviews are often the first thing someone sees about your business.

Since you’re in the business of providing a service, Google and other search engines prioritize your online profiles such as Google My Business or your Facebook page higher than your website in the search results.

That’s right. Your online profiles often rank higher than even your website!

It makes sense if you think about it.

Say you Googled “Italian restaurant” hoping to find a place to eat dinner. Google would show you the top Italian restaurants on a map near wherever you are located on a map.

The same is true for other profiles such as Facebook.

The real kicker is that these listings often show your star ratings and the number of reviews right in the search results without clicking.

Worse yet, it will show “No Reviews” if you don’t have any.

Who do you think gets more clicks in looking at the results to the right?

Obviously, it’s the one with the highest rating, and not necessarily the one with the most reviews. In fact, “a [study by CXL found](#) that star ratings in search engine results significantly improve click-through rates, by as much as 35%.”

In marketing, percentage improvements are usually in the single to low double digits. A 35% increase from having a few more reviews than your competitors is tremendous and is well worth looking into.

2. Online reviews are often THE deciding factor.

Another reason you may want to consider focusing on your online

reviews is that they are often the deciding factor on whether to call service provider A or service provider B.

In addition to stumbling on your online reviews first, a potential customer might visit your website to determine if you can likely solve their problem.

In fact, they often do this with two to three different providers to compare services, prices, and experience.

Before they call a provider, they often reference those reviews again just to make sure others have had positive experiences with you. Extra points in your favor are given if one of your reviews describe a scenario similar to the one faced by the person reading the review.

The point is, with two very similar service providers, the one who gets the most calls will likely be the one with the most reviews because reviews are often the last thing a prospective customer looks at before they pick up the phone.

3. With low volume, the businesses with the most positive reviews will win.

This leads us to our final point. At some time down the road, your business might slow or at least evolve.

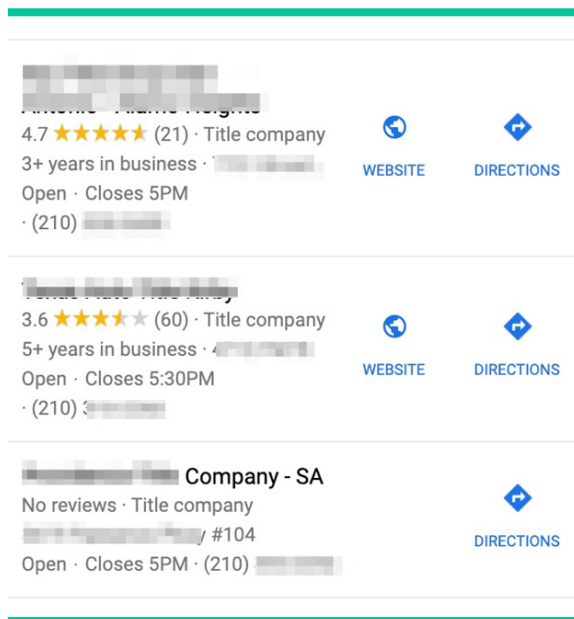
When this happens, there may be a limited amount of business to get. In real estate, maybe interest rates rise to the point where fewer people are buying houses. Whatever the reason, when markets are limited, marketing and advertising budgets are often cut. As such, the only marketing you may have at this point is your online reviews.

The limited number of people who need your services will often find you by way of your online reviews. If you’ve done a good job

of soliciting and cultivating customer reviews, the remaining customers will look at them and feel confident in the delivery of your services. In short, the company that has the best and most reviews wins in a down market.

If the coronavirus pandemic has taught us anything it is that anything is possible and nothing is guaranteed indefinitely. So yes, you need more reviews. They are the first thing that someone sees about you, and they are likely the last thing they reference before they call. And finally, they may be the only marketing you’ll have if and when your market slows.

This is why it’s critical to get more online reviews while your business is hot, so they can help you when your market is not.



ELIOT DILL is chief operating officer and co-founder of TitleTap, which provides automated marketing and website solutions for the title and settlement services industry. This article was originally posted on [Feedback Automatic](#).

CFPB Reports 54% Spike in Consumer Complaints in 2020

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) reported a 54% increase in consumer complaints last year when compared to 2019. According to the CFPB's 2020 Consumer Response Annual Report, the bureau handled approximately 542,300 complaints in 2020 versus about 352,400 complaints handled in 2019.

"The pandemic has been among the most disruptive long-term events we will see in our lifetimes," said CFPB Acting Director Dave Uejio. "Not surprisingly, the shockwaves it sent across the planet were felt deeply in the consumer financial marketplace. Consumer complaints provide the CFPB with an important real-time window into where consumers encounter problems in the marketplace. The CFPB expects companies to respond to these concerns and that consumers receive responses from companies that address the issues consumers raise in their complaints."

The report reflects issues consumers reported to the CFPB in 2020 as influenced by numerous factors including changing market conditions. The report includes analyses of complaints across multiple consumer financial products and services.

Specific to mortgages, the CFPB received roughly 29,400 complaints in 2020. The bureau sent about 25,100 (or 85%) of these complaints to companies for review and response, referred 9% to other regulatory agencies, and found 5% to be

FIGURE 36: MORTGAGE COMPLAINTS BY ISSUES AND OUTCOMES



incomplete. According to the report, companies responded to approximately 98% of mortgage complaints sent to them for review and response. Companies closed 88% of complaints with an explanation, 3% with non-monetary relief and 4% with monetary relief.

As part of the complaint process, consumers identified the issue that best described the problem they experienced. For mortgage complaints, options included: applying for a mortgage or refinancing an existing mortgage; closing on a mortgage; problem with a credit or consumer report; struggling to pay mortgage; and trouble during the payment process. The most common issue was trouble during the payment process (47%). Issues regarding mortgage closings accounted for 10% of the complaints.

Mainspring Unveils Service That Hyperlinks Documents, Creates Web-based Format

Mainspring Services has launched a new software-as-a-service (SaaS) offering that streamlines the title production process and creates a new web-based standard for title commitments and preliminary title reports.

Called titleLOOK, the technology works with both PDF and DOC file types that are exported by any production software. The application automatically hyperlinks the report to the relevant search documents, summarizes title exceptions, grades reports and alerts users to curative tasks.

"This technology is a major step forward for the space, creating a truly digital format for the industry's most important deliverable, its commitment to provide a title policy for the transaction," said Bill Boyington, CEO of Mainspring Services. "The title industry is not simply a data provider, but rather a knowledge provider. That knowledge—to assemble relevant information, identify defects and take curative action—has always been locked away within traditional document formats. TitleLOOK unlocks this powerful knowledge and makes it available digitally, leading to new and exciting opportunities."

Private Equity Firm Invests in World Wide Land Transfer

Private equity firm Corridor Capital has invested in World Wide Land Transfer to support the title company's growth and ability to provide value-added services for clients.

Britehorn Partners served as the exclusive investment bank in the transaction. Corridor Capital said the investment was made in partnership with World Wide's management.

Headquartered in Philadelphia, World Wide has offices in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Florida. The company was founded in 2004 by CEO Marc Shaw.

"I am extraordinarily proud of my team at World Wide and our shared success building World Wide into a leading title insurance agency in the Northeast," Shaw said. "Bringing on additional resources and support from Corridor is a critical step in our continued development and I am excited to welcome Corridor into the World Wide family. Through our partnership with Corridor, we are excited to continue World Wide's upward momentum through acquisition, organic growth and continuing to serve our clients with skill, knowledge, care and quality."



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Stewart Acquires A.S.K. Services

Stewart Information Services Corporation acquired A.S.K. Services Inc. to strengthen its title production resources for independent agency partners. A.S.K. Services is a provider of search and support services to the title industry, currently operating in five states and 312 counties.

“The addition of A.S.K. Services is part of our commitment to enhance our title production capabilities and underwriter technology solutions offered to our independent agent customers,” said Tara Smith, group president of Stewart Agency Services. “A.S.K. Services brings innovative technology integrations and a team of experienced search and exam professionals. Their capabilities will rapidly position us to provide integrated search products and instantly fulfill more title orders in leading markets.”

Texas Lender Launches Digital-focused Title Company

Texas-based Mid America Mortgage Inc. launched a title company dedicated to providing a more comprehensive digital mortgage closing experience to the residential real estate market. Click n’ Close Title is licensed in Texas, Ohio, Tennessee, Indiana, Michigan and Virginia.

“Having been a digital-first mortgage lending shop since 2016, we’ve observed first-hand the power of technology to transform the archaic, painful homebuying process into one with less friction and more emphasis on convenience for the consumer,” said Jeff Bode, owner and CEO of Mid America. “Title represents the final piece of this puzzle from the consumer experience perspective, and in the interest of furthering our commitment to modernizing the mortgage process, we felt the time was right to extend our knowledge to the title side of the transaction.”

Qualia Unveils New Program for Scaling PropTech Companies

Qualia released a new program enabling new and existing proptech companies to include title and escrow to their core offerings. Called Qualia Scale, the technology allows companies to integrate their own internal title operations directly or access a network of tech-enabled title and escrow companies across the United States.

“PropTech companies are increasingly turning their attention to the closing process and attaching title to their service offerings,” said Qualia CEO, Nate Baker. “There are a variety of ways to do this. Some companies choose to build their own title and escrow operations from the ground up while others want to access a network of existing title and escrow operations. No matter what model a company decides on, they can now leverage Qualia’s flexible infrastructure to create their own unique, standardized, on-brand closing experience for their consumers.”

Modus to Appeal Cease-and-Desist Order From Washington Regulator

Washington’s insurance commissioner issued a cease-and-desist order against Seattle-based title and escrow software startup Modus for allegedly violating the state’s anti-inducement regulations and offering non-title services for free in exchange for business.

Modus, which was acquired last year by Compass, is appealing the order issued by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner. In April, Compass reached an agreement to acquire Washington, D.C.-based KVS Title.

“We look forward to working with them to quickly clarify any misconceptions around our business practices,” Modus said in a statement. “Modus will remain operational

throughout the appeal process while this matter is being resolved.”

The commissioner opened an investigation after receiving complaints from two title companies in the state. Both companies, according to the order, allege that Modus offered rebates and inducements through its technology platform. The order also alleged Modus offered complimentary or co-branded advertisements.

Washington’s regulation prohibits “a title insurer, title insurance agent, or employee, agent, or other representative of a title insurer or title insurance agent from, directly or indirectly, giving any fee, kickback, or other thing of value to any person as an inducement, payment, or reward for placing business, referring business, or causing title insurance business to be given to either the title insurer, or title insurance agent, or both.”

The regulation also prohibits title companies from providing non-title services (such as computerized bookkeeping, forms management, computer programming, and trust accounting for trust accounts not held in the name of the title company) without charging and receiving a fee equal to the value of the services.

Lone Wolf Launches Solution for Real Estate Agents to Submit Digital Title Orders

Lone Wolf Technologies announced a new feature that allows real estate agents to digitally submit title orders with their preferred provider.

With Digital Title Orders, real estate agents using Lone Wolf Transactions (zipForm Edition and TransactionDesk Edition) can submit orders directly within a transaction using the information that’s already there. Agents also can directly communicate with their title agent within the transaction, keeping everything in one secure place.

"Technology is constantly enhancing our ability to provide custom solutions and a superior experience for our customers, and our integration with Lone Wolf is a prime example of the forward-looking technology that will shape the future of our industry," said Jim Dulle, senior vice president and managing director at First American Title.

The new feature was made possible through collaborative effort between Lone Wolf and title companies First American Title Co. and WFG National Title, and title software providers SoftPro and RamQuest.

Notarize Secures \$130M in Funding to Fuel Growth of Digital Transaction

Notarize announced \$130 million in Series D funding led by fintech-focused venture capital firm Canapi Ventures.

Notarize, which has raised \$213 million in total funding to date, will use the capital to expand operations to meet demand for the company's digital notarization and identity verification technology.

Through its role in giving consumers and businesses options to complete these transactions online, Notarize has increased year-over-year revenue by 600% since March 2020. The company reported it has experienced an 800% growth in volume in its real estate sector. Amid a massive increase in transactions, Notarize has also inked new partnerships with companies including Adobe, TIAA, Dropbox, Redfin, Zillow Group, First American Financial, Transamerica, Stripe and J.D. Power.

"In 2020, the world rushed to digitize," said Pat Kinsel, founder and CEO of Notarize. "Online commerce ballooned, and businesses in almost every industry needed to transition to digital basically overnight so they could continue uninterrupted."

Housing Market Potential

Existing and Potential Home Sales* (in Millions, Seasonally Adjusted Annualized Rate)

6.66 SAAR

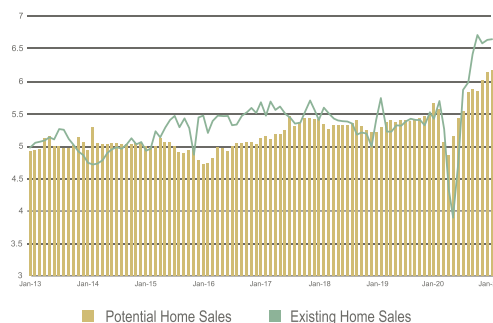
Existing Home Sales

6.18 SAAR

Potential Home Sales

+7.8%

Market Performance Gap



*Potential home sales measures what a healthy market level of home sales should be based on the economic, demographic and housing market environments.

National Consumer House-Buying Power

How much home one can afford to buy given the average income and the prevailing mortgage rate

January 2021

\$516,071

House-Buying Power

+18.9%

Year-Over-Year

Where House-Buying Power is Strongest

Top States and Cities

States

1. New Jersey: **\$683,704**
2. Maryland: **\$669,352**
3. Hawaii: **\$667,953**
4. Massachusetts: **\$650,941**
5. California: **\$627,755**

Cities

1. San Jose, CA: **\$1,133,301**
2. San Francisco, CA: **\$934,348**
3. Washington, DC: **\$864,678**
4. Boston, MA: **\$775,506**
5. San Diego, CA: **\$666,456**

Source: Mark Fleming, Chief Economist at First American Financial Corporation

JetClosing Names Former Amazon, Microsoft Exec as CEO



Seattle-based JetClosing recently named Anna Collins as its new chief executive officer. Collins has experience scaling new businesses and has held leadership roles with notable companies including Amazon, Microsoft, drugstore.com, aQuantive, and several startups. At Amazon, she held the position of general manager of Worldwide Prime Membership.

"I'm incredibly jazzed to join the JetClosing team," Collins said in a statement. "JetClosing is

changing the way customers have experienced title and escrow for the past 150 years, and we are on a mission I believe in—to make e-closings the norm for everyone from anywhere, any time."

Collins takes over for Daniel Greenshields, who led JetClosing since 2016 when the company spun out of Pioneer Square Labs.

"Anna brings a deep understanding of customers, how to scale teams and deliver innovative technology products to the market, which is critical as JetClosing continues to be an industry disruptor," Geoff Entress, co-founder of Pioneer Square Labs and director on the JetClosing board, said in a statement.

CATIC Promotes Two to SVP Positions

CATIC announced it has promoted Edward Forristall and Michael Savenelli to new senior management roles within the organization. Forristall, who served as vice president of agency operations, has been appointed as senior vice president and chief revenue officer at CATIC. He has been with CATIC for more than a decade. Meanwhile, Savenelli was promoted to senior vice president and chief operating officer at CATIC. Savenelli has been a part of the title industry for over two decades. Before the promotion, he served as vice president of operations for CATIC.

Boston National Title Names President of National Commercial Division

Boston National Title (BNT) has promoted Nicole Wolosoff to president of its national commercial division. She will remain president of BNT's New York office. Before joining BNT in 2016, Wolosoff served as vice president and director of operations and underwriting counsel at Insignia Title Agency.

Agents National Title Hires Agency Service Manager in Florida

Agents National Title Insurance Co. (ANTIC) announced that Rusty Tellone was hired as agency service manager Florida. In this role, he oversees and serves the needs of ANTIC's title agents throughout the state. Tellone has more than 20 years of industry experience, including founding and running his own title agency. He previously served as an agency representative at a national insurer.

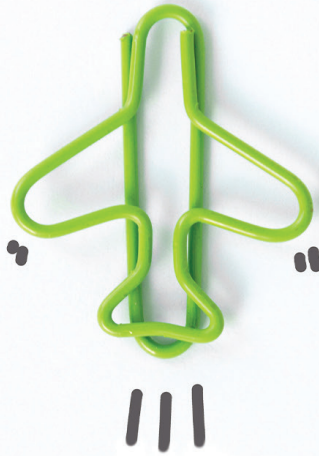
Republic Title of Texas Promotes COO

Republic Title of Texas recently promoted Chase Evans to chief operating officer. In this role, Evans, who has more than 20 years of industry experience, will provide leadership, team management and vision as he oversees the implementation of the company's strategies. Most recently, he served as senior vice president, managing the company's residential and commercial plant operations.

Stewart Title Names Group Vice President for Southeast Direct Operations

Stewart Information Services Corp. recently hired Ana Villela-Murillo as group vice president for the Southeast. In this role, she will oversee direct operations in Florida, Alabama, Arkansas and Tennessee. Prior to joining Stewart, Villela-Murillo worked at First American Title for 24 years, serving as vice president of operations since 2014 and spending the last two years managing operations Florida.

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Good Deeds Are What We Do

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, MY COMPANY—ORANGE COAST

TITLE CO.—developed a set of core values we call The OCT Way. The values are centered around commitment to service and doing whatever it takes to deliver for our customers.

To elevate and capture the industry's identity, principles and beliefs, ALTA in 2017 launched the Our Values initiative. The core tenets of the program are: We Lead, We Deliver and We Protect. The values exemplify what we do and how we do it and summarize our promise to our customers and communities.

Who we are is more than how we serve our customers. Our job descriptions have the end goal of protecting property rights, but our industry DNA compels us to protect the communities we serve.

ALTA's Good Deeds Foundation, which the association launched last year during the COVID-19 pandemic, allows the industry to centralize its philanthropic efforts by raising money and granting it to those in need. In less than six months, ALTA raised more than \$600,000. During this round of giving, the Foundation awarded \$125,000 in grants to 21 worthy groups across the country. Organizations like Second Harvest Inland Northwest in Washington gets food on the table for families, children and seniors facing hunger. The Columbus Project in Ohio creates affordable housing from neglected, abandoned housing. Meanwhile, GreenHouse17 in Kentucky provides safety and healing for women involved in abusive relationships. For Margo Collins, board chair for GRACE in Action in Washington, D.C., the grant will help her organization deliver its first home to a family that did not have a house.

There are so many inspirational examples of our industry doing good deeds. This first wave of money will reach thousands of people. Just like how we facilitate real estate transactions and help families build wealth, we can also provide the needed help and security to the most vulnerable in our society. Good deeds are needed everywhere. We need more to give back to our communities. I hope you'll consider donating altagooddeeds.org.

We understand the importance and power of doing good deeds—donating time and money to be a voice for stronger, safer communities. Good deeds are what this industry has always done. More importantly, it's something we will continue to embrace. It's what we do.



BILL BURDING NTP
ALTA president



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