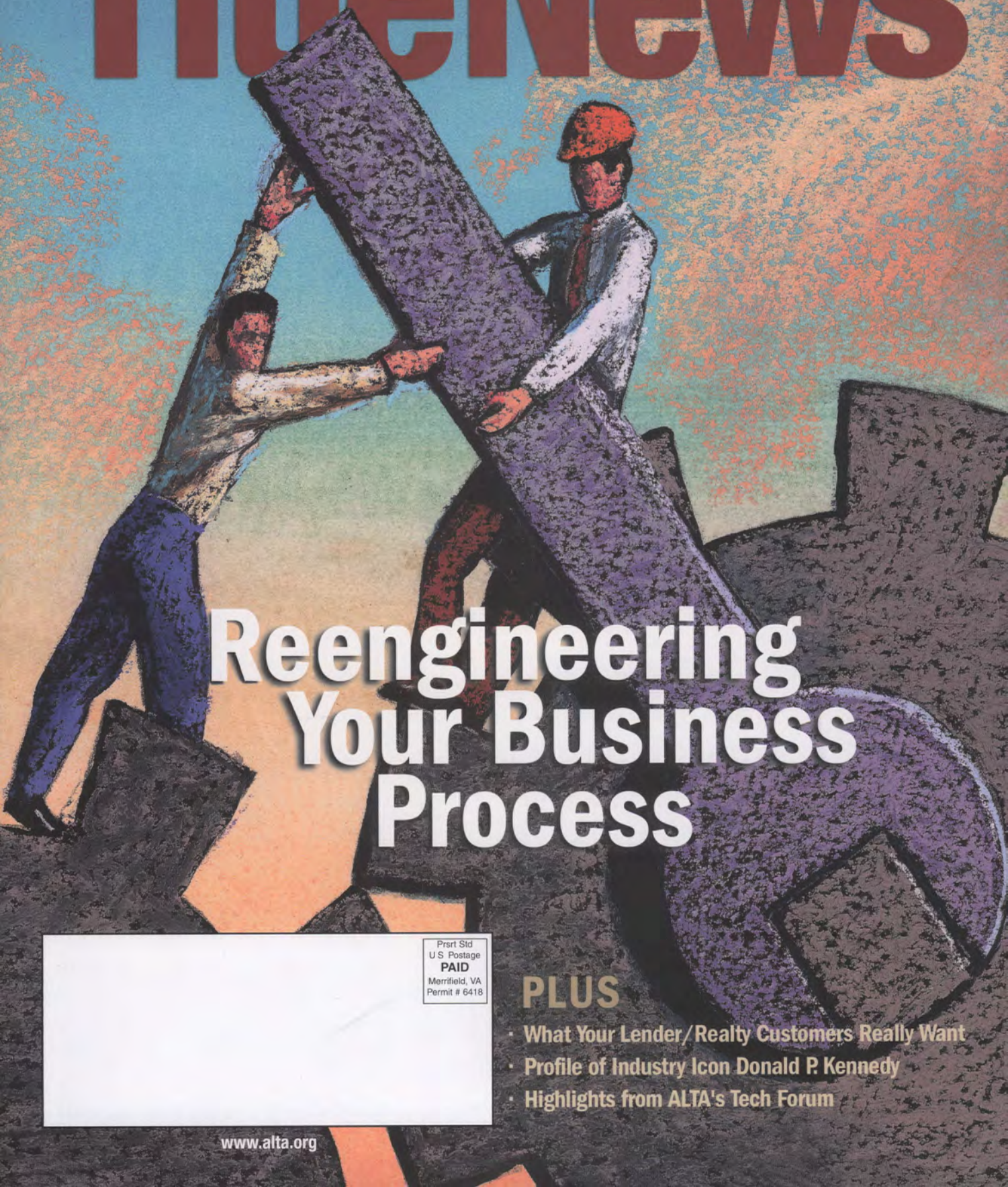


May/June 2004

Official Publication of the
American Land Title Association

Title News



Reengineering Your Business Process

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- What Your Lender/Realty Customers Really Want
- Profile of Industry Icon Donald P. Kennedy
- Highlights from ALTA's Tech Forum

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**fast and smart
wins today's.**

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First American's Donald P. Kennedy

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leading edge

A Message from the President-Elect

Lead, follow or get out of the way! What is our role?

Our industry should be very pleased with the recent decision by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to withdraw its proposed RESPA rule from the office of Management & Budget (OMB). HUD now says they will revise and then re-propose the rules after further input from Congress, consumer groups, and industry leaders. What a great victory for the ALTA, the real estate industry, and, most of all, the consumers!

However, it raises some questions and concerns we should note. Are there really problems with the process, and if so, what are they and how do we fix them? I think everyone agrees there are problems with the process. However, we should not

just sit on the sidelines waiting for HUD or anyone else to provide the answers or solutions to any problems which may currently exist in the real estate closing process—that should be our role!

ALTA's new public relations campaign is currently in full swing, and the tag line is "Protecting the American Dream, One Home at a Time."

If that is our role, and I believe it is, now is the time for our industry to step forward and lead by example in improving the closing process. Many of our members have

already stepped up and are offering variations of bundled services to the consumer. They have been able to improve the customers' overall experience and still be profitable. That should be everyone's goal!

ALTA's membership is very diverse, and there will not be one solution or answer that will work well in all parts of the country. Each of us should review our current procedures, market forces, and current laws to find areas to improve the closing process in our own shops.

One of the points ALTA used in discussions with HUD and OMB was that our industry is already evolving toward solutions for many of their concerns. Ours is a natural evolution and not one created by a law, which can create an uneven playing field for the industry. By our industry reacting to our customers' needs, we will be able to make the necessary changes and insure that any savings in time or money reach the proper party, the consumer.

We are the experts in this field. There is no one who knows more about our industry than we do. The role we must now play is that of LEADER. We cannot sit by quietly and let others dictate our path or we will truly lose our ability to "Protect the American Dream."

Mark A. Bilbrey



TitleNews

Publisher: James R. Maher
Editor in Chief: Lorri Lee Ragan, APR
Design/Electronic Production Manager: Christina Rizzoni
©2004 American Land Title Association

Title News is published bimonthly by the American Land Title Association, 1828 L Street, N.W., Suite 705, Washington, DC 20036. U.S. and Canadian subscription rates are \$30 a year (member rate); \$48 a year (nonmember rate).

For subscription information, call 1-800-787-ALTA. Send address changes to: Title News, circulation manager, at the above stated address.

Anyone is invited to contribute articles, reports, and photographs concerning issues of the title industry. The Association, however, reserves the right to edit all material submitted. Editorials and articles are not statements of Association policy and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor or the Association.

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ALTAnews

ALTA Technology Committee Launches Standards Project

The Title Abstract Standards Initiative (TASI) Subcommittee is working to create a fully integrateable electronic abstract. This "smart document" will allow ALTA members to seamlessly share base title data with any party in a real estate transaction without forcing any group to adopt a standardized form. The first step is to agree on the data elements to be included in the standard. The second step will be the creation of a Title Abstract Data Standard (TADS), an open-architecture, industry-accepted format for base-level information from which all title products derive. The third step will be integration of TADS into MISMO for approval and maintenance.

TADS will allow the title industry to speak the same language since the standard is created by and for the industry, providing many benefits:

- TADS will reduce labor-intensive and costly rekeying of information by giving you the ability to use the elements and data to producing a virtually limitless variety of outputs and forms (e.g. paper, Web pages, databases, messages).
- TADS will increase efficiency and accuracy by allowing you to pass the original "electronic documents" downstream to other systems. This will reduce costs.
- TADS will enable you to communicate standardized data to a computer so that a variety of real estate industry applications (including those of the future) can use the information.
- TADS will allow you to communicate data-based information in a way that you and your staff can quickly read and understand.
- TADS will be a standard created by the title industry and based on what the title industry decides is important.

The TASI Subcommittee has developed a draft list of data elements to be compiled into a Logical Data Dictionary (LDD) or TADS Version 1.0, currently stored in Microsoft Excel®. Each data element has been assigned a preliminary name and definition.

We need your help to complete the list, which has a targeted completion in the late summer of 2004. The data elements are currently divided into "building blocks" of related information. The final version of these "building blocks" and the data elements they contain will allow you to communicate and exchange standard data and information.

You can learn more by visiting <http://www.alta.org/tchnlg/tasi.htm> to review the draft list of data elements. Questions? Contact the subcommittee at tasi@alta.org or staff coordinator Kelly Romeo at kelly_romeo@alta.org.

calendar

ALTA Events

May

16-19
Annual Internal Auditors Meeting
Key West, FL

June

18-19
Education Committee Meeting
Baltimore, MD

July

23-26
Large Agents Meeting
Victoria, Canada

August

7-10
Annual Reinsurance Meeting
Williamsburg, VA

October

6-9
ALTA Annual Convention
Boston, MA

State Conventions

May

23-25 California
23-26 New Jersey

June

2-4 South Dakota
3-6 Pennsylvania

June, cont.

4-6 Texas
4-6 Virginia
6-9 Wyoming
24-26 Arkansas
24-27 New England

July

15-17 Illinois
15-17 Utah
18-20 Michigan

August

5-7 Montana
8-11 New York
12-14 Minnesota
19-21 Idaho
19-21 Indiana

September

2-4 Wisconsin
9-10 Arizona
9-11 Dixie
11-12 Maryland
16-18 North Carolina
16-19 Missouri
19-21 Ohio
22-24 Nebraska
23-25 North Dakota

November

17-19 Florida

December

2-3 Louisiana

ALTAnews

Calling All Presenters!

ALTA has issued a Call for Presentations for the Annual Convention, October 6-9 in Boston. If you would like to share your expertise with your peers, now is the time to step up. If you would like to submit an idea for a paper or would like suggestions on potential topic areas, go to ALTA's Web site and click on "Annual Convention" to find a list of topics and a Call for Presentations form. If you have questions, you can contact Pat Berman, ALTA's director of education, at pat_berman@alta.org or 1-800-787-2582.

Thank You New England

Special thanks to the New England Land Title Association for its contribution to the ALTA public awareness campaign. New England joins six other land title associations who have contributed to the campaign: Maryland, Minnesota, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah, and Wyoming. See opposite column for an update on the most recent activities in the campaign. Contact Lorri Ragan at lorri_ragan@alta.org or 1-800-787-2582 for more information on the campaign and how you can help.

ALTA Membership Directory Available Soon!

Early this summer members will receive their copy of ALTA's annual Membership Directory—one of the most popular and valuable ALTA member benefits. Each office that is listed in the directory automatically receives one copy. However, it's not uncommon for offices to need more than one directory. Plan ahead and order your additional copies now.

What would you use an extra copy of the Directory for?

- Have one for working at home
- Have extras in the office so you won't have to share
- Look up out-of-state referrals for your clients
- Check out the competition

Call ALTA now at 1-800-787-ALTA and request a 2004-2005 ALTA Membership Directory Order Form! Orders will be shipped once the Directory is printed.

ALTA Public Awareness Campaign Update

Marketing Kit a Success

As of mid-April, Ervin Bell had fulfilled requests for 850 Title Industry Marketing Kits. The kit has recently been promoted at the Tech Forum, on ALTA's Web site, in *Title News*, in ALTA E-News, in the Title Report, and in several state affiliate publications. As a result we still receive multiple requests each week. ALTA plans to follow up with each recipient offering ideas on how to use the pieces in the kit. If you have not yet ordered your free copy of the kit, you can do so on ALTA's home page under "ALTA News."

Ads Reach Real Estate Agents/Lenders

The March and April issues of *REALTOR* magazine featured our ad directed toward real estate agents. The ads were designed to educate Realtors® about the valuable services that title professionals provide to them and their consumer customers. See the inside back cover for a sample ad. In addition, we placed an "eye blaster" ad on homestore.com (an eyeblaster ad bounces on the page as opposed to a stationary banner ad). This ad received 6,990 click-throughs to the ALTA Web site for the month of March. The ad is scheduled to appear again in April and May.

Our ad, directed to reach the lender market, appeared in the March 22 and April 19 issues of *National Mortgage News*. Similar ads will be placed in the April, May, and June issues of *Mortgage Banking*.

Other Activities

In addition, Ervin Bell wrote an editorial on our position on RESPA over Jim Maher's byline, and distributed it to 95 newspapers in 20 states. Ervin Bell helped out on the ongoing issue of Radian Guaranty and have helped several state land title associations with public relations issues. Ervin Bell is scheduled to speak to several land title associations over the next few months.

GOVERNMENT & AGENCY news

RESPA Victory For Title Industry

It was a huge victory for the title industry and for consumers that HUD withdrew its proposed changes to RESPA. This did not happen without a lot of work from Ann vom Eigen, ALTA's legislative and regulatory counsel, ALTA's government affairs committee, and from ALTA members. ALTA has been actively working for well over a year to convince HUD, Congress, and other groups affected by the problems with the HUD packaging approach and the adverse impact it would have on consumers and on our industry, particularly the thousands of small businesses in our industry.

You even may recall that when HUD first proposed its changes, many other industry groups were in favor of it. However, many hearings, letters, and meetings later, the other major players in the real estate industry came to agree with ALTA.

This past January ALTA testified with other industry groups before the House Small Business Committee, and we heard that not one of the groups was in favor of changes to RESPA at this time. Everyone agreed that the real estate market was a shining light in the U.S. economy and that now was not the time to make changes.

The final nail in HUD's coffin, so to speak, was the letter signed by over 250 members of Congress asking the Office of Management and Budget to send HUD's proposal back without approval. ALTA members are to be commended for writing to their members of Congress asking them to sign on to that letter. You can see a copy of the letter on ALTA's home page.

We are not sure if this means an end to RESPA reform or not. But for the time being HUD's proposal is dead. However we can't rest on this success. As an industry we need to be looking at packaging and how we can respond to consumer need for simplification of the settlement process.

To see more recent news on RESPA, go to ALTA's home page and look for the heading "RESPA Update," or go to the Government Affairs page and select RESPA as the issue.



ALTA president-elect, Mark Bilbrey (center) and Stan and Beverly Jones, Grand River Abstract & Title Co. in Jay, OK (far left), attended a fundraiser for Rep. Brad Carson (D-OK) who is running for the U.S. Senate. Carson is pictured second from right, next to his wife Julie.



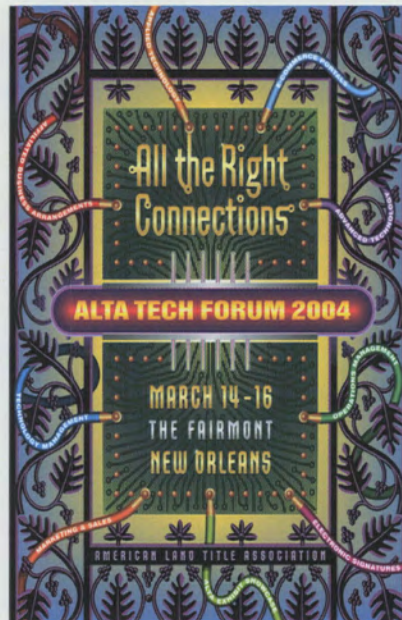
A delegation of members from Texas made visits to the hill in February to talk to members of Congress about the proposed changes to RESPA and its negative impact on our industry.

convention highlights

Tech Forum Attendees Made All the Right Connections



Keynote speaker Suzanne Penley surveyed lenders and realty agents to find out what they wanted in a title company. Raise your hand if you know the answer! (Hint: See her article on page 18)



Session speakers were very interactive—asking questions and seeking audience participation.

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CEOs from large underwriters told participants about what they needed to do to stay on the cutting edge of competition in 2004. Moderator Darryl Turner has an "aha" moment as one of the panel members answers a question.

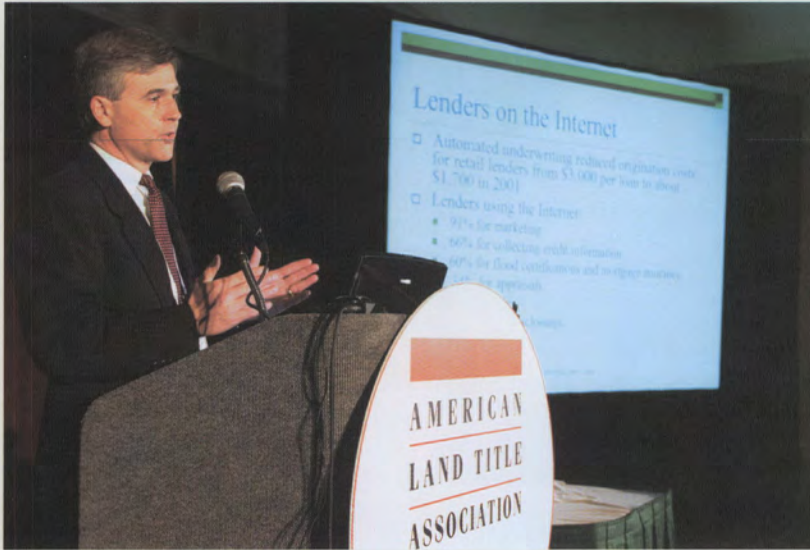


Lots of demonstrations took place in the Exhibit Showcase allowing participants to learn how technology can make their business lives easier.



Even indoors, ALTA members love their golf!

convention highlights



John Rees gave an informative presentation on minimizing risks while doing business on the Internet. Look for an article on his presentation in an upcoming issue of *Title News*.

ALTA surveys indicate that more younger people are entering the title business!

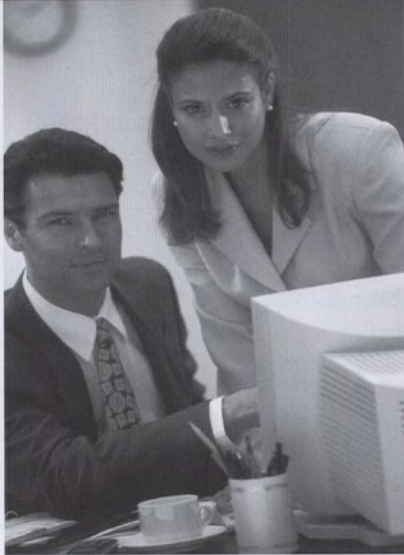


The Exhibit Showcase was crowded this year with attendees visiting more than 40 exhibitors with products and services specifically for the title industry.



**Thank you to all who attended Tech Forum 2004.
See you next year in Orlando, April 17-19!**

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Reengineering Your Business Process

Using a fictional title company as an example, learn how to improve your business process to become the Big Dog in your market.

by Mike Hathaway

John is the president of ABC Title Company. ABC Title has ten employees: John (president), two abstractors, two examiners, two escrow officers, two assistant escrow officers, and one courthouse runner.

Policies take about two weeks, and the escrow officers average 32 hours of overtime per month to keep up with the orders. ABC Title has a title

plant with a combination of paper and microfilm. There are ten years of index data in a title plant program. ABC Title does about a hundred closings with title policies each month (8% of the total market for the county) with a profit margin of 11%. John is doing no marketing and actually turning away some business because his people do not have time to do the additional work. Looking to the future, John wants 50% of the market and a profit margin of about 30%.

I have been consulting for title companies across the country for the

last seven years. The title company just described is fictitious and typical of most title companies. Some companies are larger, but they all operate in a similar way. If you were John, how would you jump from 8% to 50% of the market, and from 11% to 30% profit margin? The right way to do it is to improve your business process. Improving your business process introduces the change necessary to reduce expenses, increase your productivity, increase profits, and increase customer satisfaction. Let's

cover story

use ABC Title as a model, and see how business process improvement tools and methods can help John get to 50% of the market and 30% profit. We'll use the basic who, what, when, and how questions to walk through this example.

WHO (NEEDS BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT)?

All businesses need business process improvement. No one is exempt. Unless you are 100% profitable with absolutely zero defects, you need to use process improvement. A defect is anything that reduces customer satisfaction. Customers can be internal (your employees) or external (your clients). When an order is

Many business owners like to postpone changes to see what the next person is going to do first.

entered into your system and data has to be corrected after it leaves order entry, that is a defect. If you go to closing and a name is wrong or information is missing, that is a defect. If your clients review the HUD-1 form and something is wrong or missing, that is a defect. Anything that causes an order to be stopped to obtain more information that should already be included, that is a defect. Any time a client walks away from a closing less than 100% satisfied, for whatever reason, that is a defect. If any employee has to do things twice because of bad information, that is a defect. When an employee has to spend overtime away from the family, that is a defect. You get the idea. All title companies have defects—some to a greater degree than others do. However, all defects cause customer dissatisfaction, and all defects cost the business money. So, who needs business process improvement—all companies need it.

WHAT (PROCESS DO I IMPROVE)?

John found a certified consultant with title industry experience and he attended a two-day class on process improvement. Then he selected one employee to serve as a project champion. The consultant set up several communication tools for John and his champion. This allowed the consultant to manage the projects remotely. The consultant performed a business process analysis. The consultant showed John many areas where he could improve his business. It suggested John start with some projects that would have a quick turnaround and good capital Return on Investment (ROI). He could then reinvest the additional capital on the bigger projects. John decided to tackle

the overtime issue first (a projected cash savings of about \$2,300 per month). The consultant did a project analysis for the overtime project and came back with some recommendations for technology improvements, training, and some significant changes in the current business process.

Informed decisions rely on quality information. Break your business down into specific services, such as Residential Mortgages, Commercial Mortgages, Refi's, Policies, Title Searches, Courtesy Closings, Document Preparation, etc. You can then use that information to identify the redundancies, process loops, defects, and bottlenecks. Eighty percent of the time spent for any service relies on 20% of the work performed. Improve the speed of that 20%, and you can reduce 80% of the time it takes to do the work. That reduction in time can save cash as well as increase productivity and profit.

Many title companies already own

the technology needed for transaction management, virtual communications, and improved process flow. Most title companies either do not use those tools or do not fully integrate the tools into their business processes. The major hurdle is employee cooperation. You can buy your employees the greatest, fastest, most expensive computers and software the world has to offer, but if they do not use them—then all you have is a very fast and expensive electronic typewriter.

The business process analysis identified manual faxing as a big issue. The escrow officers and assistants were sending an average of ten manual faxes and an receiving an additional five to ten faxes each day. Each fax required the user to get up from his/her desk, walk to a fax machine, input the number, and then wait for confirmation. Most of the time the employee was interrupted to answer a question or just to talk. On average, each fax took about ten minutes. This added up to an average of 150 minutes per person per day – that is 200 hours per month to do manual faxes. A project analysis showed a network faxing solution would reduce the average time per fax to about two minutes – a savings of 140 hours per month. The solution would cost approximately \$10,000. Additionally, a review of John's financials showed he was spending \$1,500 per month on telecommunications for a 320K DSL line, PBX and four analog lines (for the fax machines). John agreed to a network faxing solution (about \$7,500), including an internal IP telephony solution (about \$4,000), and an Internet bandwidth upgrade to 1.5MB (a cost of \$150/month). This cut his monthly phone bills from \$1,500 to \$700. The consultant's fee was \$7,500 for the initial business process analysis and managing the project. The project installation and training took about two weeks. ABC Title picked up an additional ten closings per month. Here is the result:

cover story

Project (over 3 months)

Process Analysis	-\$5,000
Fax Server	-\$10,000
IP telephony	-\$4,000
Changes to phone lines	\$2,400
Project management and training	-\$2,500
Overtime savings (2.5 months)	\$5,760
Additional Orders (avg \$900 profit/order)	\$22,500
Total Profit/loss	\$9,160

Note: Overtime savings and additional orders were calculated for 2.5 months to account for the 2 week installation and training time

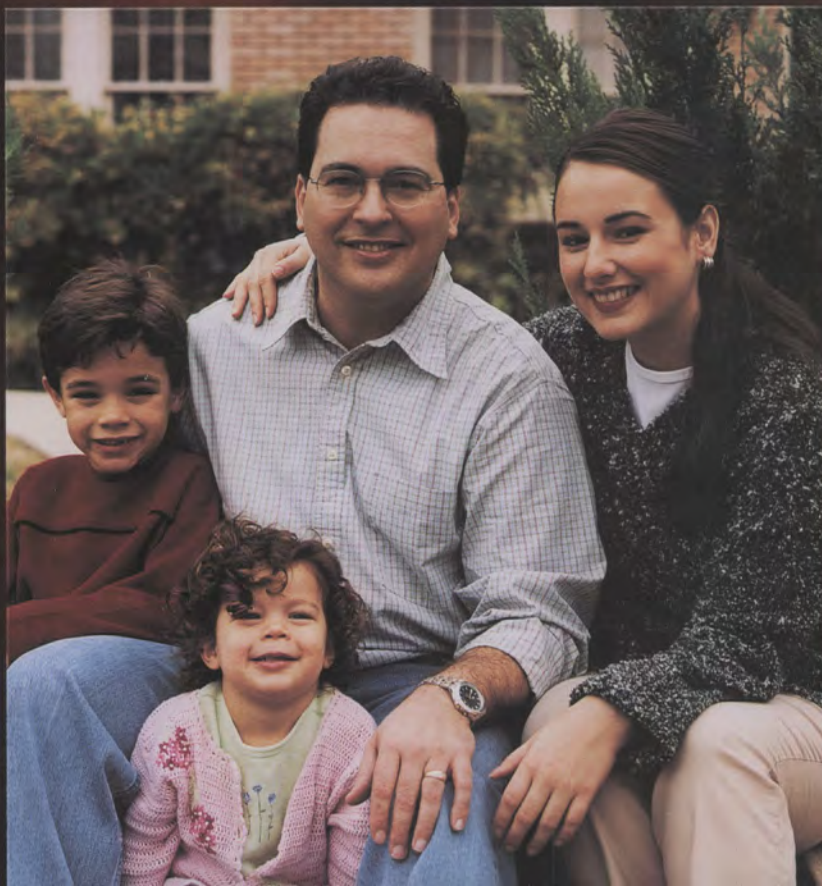
WHEN (SHOULD I DO IT)?

Many business owners like to postpone changes to see what the next person is going to do first. That is a big mistake now. The title industry is moving to centralized and shared title plants, transaction management, and

virtual offices. The pace of technology is increasing, and the business owners who react first will get the lion's share of the market. You have to do business cleaner, faster, cheaper, or any combination of these in order to take market share from your competitors. The reality is this—lenders and mortgage companies have shareholders they have to satisfy. If you can show them you have the technology to improve their profit by doing business with you, then they will. The first one in your market to offer Web-enabled access to documents and information, high technology communications (network faxing, instant messaging, etc.), and improved performance (time from order to close) will take the majority of the market share in any market. So, if you don't make your move now, you may find the little guy

around the corner made the investment and is now the Big Dog in the county. And remember, it costs twice as much to get a lost customer back as it does to get a customer in the first place.

"It's not so much that we're afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it's that place in between that we fear...It's Linus when his blanket is in the dryer. There's nothing to hold on to." (Trina Hoefling) Change is difficult at best. Trying to improve without using the principles of process improvement can have the opposite effect, and many times adds complexity and overhead to a business instead of the improvement sought after. So we need to get smart and use sound process improvement and project management principles to limit the side effects of change.



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cover story

After John's first project was complete, he and the consultant reviewed the changes made to his business process. Further improvement would include simplifying some of the complex tasks, reducing the defects in the production department, and taking a hard look at his title plant. The consultant suggested three large projects. First – upgrade the production software and re-design the production process from scratch. Second – work on reducing complexity and speeding up the production process with the current software. Third – automating the title plant, revising the commitment process, and selling the title information on the Internet. The first project would cost about \$189,000, take at least three months to complete. The second project would cost \$77,000, and take about two months. The third project would take six months and cost \$202,000. John had the consultant do the project analysis on each project. The ROI for each project looked like this:

Project One (6 month ROI)	
Software Upgrade	\$27,000
Project management and training	\$25,000
Technology Upgrade	\$75,000
Projected increase in orders Note: prorated as 10% per month until at 50% total increase in 6 mo – (avg \$900 profit/order)	\$207,900
Marketing costs	\$20,000
Data conversion	\$10,000
Increased personnel costs (2 Escrow Officers hired 2 months into project)	\$32,000
Total Profit/loss	\$18,900

NOTE: After 6 months – monthly net increase in profit would be about \$51,000 per month with no increase in office space and 2 additional personnel with a total of 176 orders/month

John sees that the least expensive project is Project Two – but it will not get him to his goal and he still needs to improve his title plant situation. Project One gets to both of his goals, but again ignores the plant. Project Three fixes the title plant but does little to help him achieve his goals. John realized that doing Project Two would be a waste of

Project Two (6 month ROI)	
Project Management and Training	\$25,000
Projected increase in orders 20% beginning at month 3 (avg \$900 profit/order)	\$79,200
Marketing Costs	\$20,000
Increased personnel costs (2 Escrow officers hired 2 months into project)	\$32,000
Total Profit/loss	\$2,200

NOTE: After 6 months – monthly net increase in profit would be about \$19,800 per month with no increase in office space and 2 additional personnel with a total of 133 orders/month

Project Three (12 month ROI) (20 year digital title plant with images)	
Project Management and Training	\$25,000
Software Upgrade	\$12,000
Hardware Upgrade	\$40,000
Scanning/Indexing	\$120,000
Projected Income from selling access (\$30/search, \$0.50/page for copies of docs) NOTE: income from external searches won't begin until after 6 months	\$63,000
Marketing Costs	\$5,000
Projected reduction in commitment overhead (from avg 8 hours to avg 1 hour commitment time)	\$36,960
Additional services (O&E reports & title searches, etc.)	\$108,000
Total Profit/loss	\$5,960

NOTE: After 12 months – monthly net increase in profit would be about \$28,500 per month with no increase in office space or personnel

his capital since he would still have to do Project One within the next 12 months. He also sees the changes in the industry and wants to get a jump on his competitors in the market. Now that the company is seeing an increased monthly profit (about \$7,000/month increase from his first project), he decides to do Project One, then use the increased revenue to start Project Three in nine months. The consultant helped him revise his business plans, do the project

analysis, get financing, and then manage the project. Within less than a year, John has exceeded his goal and increased his overhead by only two personnel with no overtime. His employees are happier, and he is back to his original problem of turning away business because he can't do it all.

HOW (DO I GET STARTED)?

Business process improvement has recently started to gain momentum in the title industry. There is no way to address all the tools and methods of business process improvement in the text of a magazine article. However, here are some simple basics behind business process improvement.

1. Break down your business into specific services. Most companies do their accounting as a business whole. In order to identify process problems effectively, identify each service independently. Some examples of different title services are Residential Mortgages, Commercial Mortgages, Refinances, Title Reports, Courtesy Closings, etc. You also need to identify the average number of opportunities per month for each service.

2. Identify costs associated with each service. Break out associated costs for each service, such as labor, facilities, office supplies, associated fees, etc. Then do a profit analysis for each service to include total cost, total overhead, and total profit per transaction.

3. Document your Business Process. It is impossible to do anything to improve your business if you don't understand how you do business. A good process analysis provides a detailed business process flow for each different service (i.e. Mortgage, Refinance, Courtesy Closing, Title Report, etc.) and a map showing a macro view of how work flows through the business organization. A good consultant can

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do a basic business process analysis in a very short time, and it is a good investment. Note that once you document your business processes, you need to review them regularly and update changes as they occur.

4. Identify defects. This area causes some confusion. There are actually two types of customers in a service business like a title company, the internal customer (employees) and the external customer (clients). Indications of internal customer dissatisfaction (defects) are unhappy or frustrated employees, a high employee turnover rate, apathy, absenteeism, etc. A good point to remember is that your most expensive resource is your employee. Indications of external customer dissatisfaction (defects) are loss of clients, failure to increase market share, bad reviews in local media, multiple calls to correct

information, etc. Every one of these starts with a defect somewhere in your business process.

projects that may give you a large return on investment (ROI) with some very small changes.

Unless you are 100% profitable with absolutely zero defects, you need to use process improvement.

5. Identify your areas of pain.

Define the parts of your process that are causing the most defects or pain in your business. Prioritize them so that you can make informed decisions about your business strategies and projects.

6. Select an improvement project.

Use the information you have obtained to select a business improvement project. As you evaluate the information, you will find many

7. Analyze the project ROI.

It is important to do a cost analysis for the project along with a projected rate of return. Use sound accounting principles to decide what projects to pursue. Do not over-extend your cash reserves and lose sight of the goal—improve satisfaction and profits by eliminating defects and improving value and speed. A consultant can give you an accurate ROI analysis.

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8. Implement the project. Invest in an outside consultant to help you execute the project. He/she will have the expertise to measure changes, run change experiments, and facilitate the training and integration of changes into your existing business process. Project implementation is key to achieving your expected results. If you do not execute your project correctly, you may actually see decreased revenue and increased defects.

9. Formalize changes. After the project is complete, and the results verified, formalize the process changes across your entire organization, and establish tools to measure adherence to the new standards.

The example of ABC Title Company certainly does not describe all the work involved in any of the projects listed. If projects are planned

and managed properly, and follow business process rules, every title company can achieve similar results. The question now is who will be the first title company in your market to do it? Look for a consultant with title and service industry experience. Consultants are not inexpensive, but the results are worth the investment. The key here is to be flexible, be informed, and make your business decisions based on what will best improve your business process. Do that—and whether you're small or big—you can be the Big Dog in your market.



Mike Hathaway is chief operations officer for TDMS, Inc., Denison, TX, a leader in business process improvement for the title industry. This article is an excerpt from his presentation during ALTA's Tech Forum this past March. Mike can be reached at 903-436-3091 or mike.hathaway@tdmsinc.net.

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What Do Your Customers Really Want?

In today's competitive atmosphere we cannot afford to take our customers for granted. Just what are they looking for in a title company?

by Suzanne Penley

What if you were given a lie detector test with this one

question, "Do you know what your customers want?" If you answered "yes," would you pass the test?

Most of us would like to think we know what our customers want and what they like about doing business with us. And, of course, we know that they would tell us if there is something they don't like. Right? Quite the opposite.

The title industry is quite unique. Loyalty is a word that has minimal resonance, so striving to create loyal customers is not essential to success. But what is? In my work with various title organizations and their customers, there are obvious things that customers want. However, I believe that many times these things are being overlooked because they are not "big" things; they in fact are little things. Let's put it this way—have

you ever been bitten by an elephant? No you haven't—elephants don't bite. Have you ever been bitten by a mosquito? Sure you have. Therefore, it's truly the little things that eat you alive! Likewise, it's truly the little things your company does that make the biggest differences. You may be thinking that customer service can't be that easy. Well, it can.

THE LITTLE THINGS

Think of the last time you had a not-so-good customer service experience. What about that experience made you unhappy? Was it something big that went wrong, or was it something little. Did it change your beliefs about that organization or individual? Did you tell others about it? If you are like most people, that experience did change your beliefs. We all can agree that the truth is important, but what matters most to customers are perceptions. We often don't know the truths—why something happened, why the information did not get to us on time, why we can't close on the date expected. We put aside the truth in favor of perceptions—how the incident made us feel. It's human nature to often base more on emotions than logic.

You need to understand that to your customers, everything you do happens behind an imaginary "Employees Only Door"—all the activity they don't see. What goes on behind those doors does not matter to

your customers, that's your job. On the customer side of the "Employees Only Door," is how your customers see you.

In my frequent travels and hours spent in airports, I'm often reminded of how the "Employee's Only Door" works. When I am at the gate lobby waiting for a flight, the things going on behind the "Employees Only Door" could be scheduling, arranging, mapping the course, cleaning the plane, making sure the plane is mechanically sound and fueled up. On my side (the customer side) of the door there are only three things important to me: What time do we leave? What time do we get there? And, when am I going to see my luggage again? Which side is more important? To the customers, it is their side. Take a step to the customer side of your "Employees Only Door"—find out how your customers see you and what matters to them. Unless you get in touch with those little things, you'll wonder why customers don't seem to understand you.

NEW LEADS OR NEW EYES

When I surveyed agents and lenders about their experiences with title companies, there was one common denominator that stood out as a reason why they favored one company over another: how they were treated after they started doing business with the title company. Who said that we



Suzanne Penley is a nationally recognized motivational speaker and the president of Customer Focused Systems, a full-service consulting and training firm specializing in Customer Service, Sales, Leadership and Management.

This article is an excerpt from her presentation during ALTA's Tech forum in March. You can reach Suzanne at: 877-592-8282 or Suzanne@CustomerFocusedSystems.com.

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should treat people differently once they become a customer? Don't think they don't notice; they do. In the sales process, we treat prospective customers differently than we do those already doing business with us. Why? Because we want their business. I like to equate it to dating. In the beginning men wash their cars before they pick up their dates, they bring flowers, and they dine at fine restaurants. Why? Because they want to make a good impression—they want their dates to like them. Then, after time passes, the special treatment stops. Too often we become complacent and let our customer service guard down with existing customers. But when you treat your existing customers as if they are constant prospects, they notice. Think about it—these are people who know you, have trust in you, and want

to be reminded that they made the right decision to do business with you. Are you nurturing that? The key is to not focus so much on new leads but to see your current customers with a new eye. Customers right in front of you are just waiting for you to give them a reason to refer new business your way.

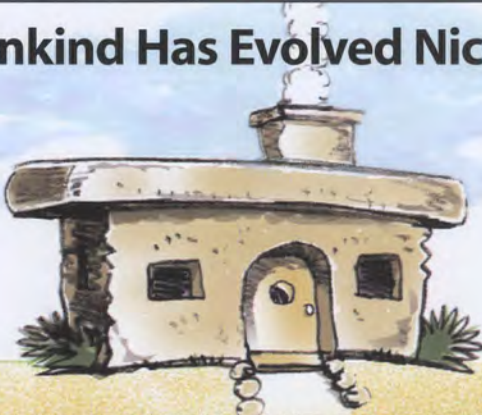
THOSE NICE CUSTOMERS

Customers can sure be nice. They can be so nice that you'll lose their business and you won't know why. When I was growing up in the fine southern state of Alabama, one of the things my grandmother taught me was to be nice. She told me that sometimes it was best to say nothing than to say something not so nice. Bet you do that too, don't you? In the title industry, you might be surprised to learn that when one of your

customers feels that the service could be better, they often adopts the "nice" mentality. Before I tell you more, let's define "could be better." Any time your customers feel that they didn't get what they expected, you didn't return their telephone call when they thought you should, you made a mistake and didn't acknowledge it, or you didn't fax the HUD statement immediately, they feel that things "could be better." We think that they should know why you weren't able to return calls more timely, that the reason their expectation wasn't met was because, frankly, it was unrealistic to begin with, and so on. Remember the "Employees Only Door."

Only 4% of the time will a customer voluntarily tell you when they think things could be better; it's just easier to be nice. But don't think that just because they are not telling

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you that they're not telling someone. Customers talk but often not to you. There are several reasons why—first and foremost, most human beings don't like conflict to begin with. Other reasons are they think you'll make an excuse and make them feel bad, they think that nothing will change, and they often believe that you don't value them, because if you did, the problem would not be occurring. Customers think we are mind readers. Become one by asking on a regular basis: Is everything going like you believe it should? Am I getting you everything you need on time? What suggestions for improvement do you have for me at this point? Think for a moment of the impact just one dissatisfied customer can have. People talk. Those who think things "could be better" will gladly share with their colleagues in the industry. Think of it this way: Is there a customer who just stopped doing business with you? Do you know why, or were they just "nice" and slipped away quietly?

THOSE DUMB CUSTOMERS

Prior to starting my company in 1993, I spent ten years as the director of guest, patient, and public relations for a large healthcare organization. In those ten years I learned a lot from half-naked people who didn't feel good. One of the most important lessons I learned about people is that we should embrace the dumb ones, those customers that make us feel so smart sometimes. Have you ever had a customer do something so dumb you thought they fell out of the dumb tree and hit every branch on the way down? Have you ever had a customer say something that you had to use willpower to keep from laughing? Guess what? They've laughed at you too. "Dumb" customers—I hate to use that word, but let's call them what they are. We've all experienced

situations when customers did dumb things—gave us the wrong address, submitted the wrong document. I have learned a lot from these customers; you can too. You see people don't do dumb or stupid things on purpose; somehow the action generally makes all the sense in the world to them. I'll go back to the "Employees Only Door"—what we do, how we do it. People often don't understand, but it's really not their job. When a customer does something that you might define as dumb, stop and ask what you did, or didn't do, to allow that customer to come up with such an expectation or how they handled a situation. Many times when several "dumb" situations occur, the customer is telling you that something isn't working. Find out what that is and fix it.

WHAT CUSTOMERS WANT YOU TO KNOW

As with most things, we miss so many opportunities because we aren't looking for them the moment they occur. Customers have basic "must-haves"—these are the things they want, the things that will keep them coming back.

Customers want you to ask them questions. They really do want to trust you. They really do want to know that you have all the answers. But, don't be such an expert at what you do that you fail to ask questions. Most likely—you fail to ask the questions that you already know the answers to. I'll give you an example. Let's assume that it is the cold and flu season, and you have been ill for about four days with a fever, body aches, running nose, headache, and nausea. You decide to see a doctor. Upon arrival at the office, you quickly discover a waiting room full of others who appear to have the same symptoms as you. When you finally get to see the doctor, he takes one

look at you and proudly announces that you, too, have the flu. He hands you a prescription and tells you to call the office if you're not better in a few days. Now, chances are pretty good that the doctor's diagnosis was correct—the outward clues and the fact that

Treat your existing customers as if they are constant prospects; they'll notice.

others seen before you looked to be suffering from the same illness. But what was missing? Questions. The doctor didn't ask you questions. He didn't ask you questions that, frankly, he really already knew the answers to—he quickly offered a solution. Even though you are the expert, and you want to be quick to offer solutions to your customers, be sure to ask a few questions—questions you most likely already know the answer to. Therefore, when you offer that solution, your customer has trust in the solution.

Nurture every customer's sense of importance. I said earlier that customers want to feel important. In fact we all do. But sometimes we inadvertently rob people of their uniqueness. We do this by treating them all the same—they're not. When you say things like "I have another customer with the same problem..." or "All new homebuyers go through this..." what you are really saying is "you're not special". Instead say things like, "I have another customer with a similar situation..." or "Some of my other customers have experienced similar things..." People feel unique. People value uniqueness.

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have to be completed by the customer, offer to drop off packets (or arrange for a courier service), be prepared—in other words, save time. You win, your customer wins, and your company wins.

Be easy to do business with. One of the most amazing trends I see in customers today is how they will move their business to another title company because they perceive that other company is easier to do business with. One of my clients in the Houston area had an agent comment that she really needed a title company that would stay open late one night a week and do closings on Saturdays (with advance notice). Initially, the company balked—wouldn't even think about it. But I convinced them to tell the real estate agent that they would indeed be happy to be available when it was convenient for her. Just the fact that they said they would be

available did the trick. Since then, she has not scheduled one appointment outside of normal hours or on Saturdays. However, this agent reports that the title company is “so much easier to do business with than in the past.” But what if the agent had taken advantage of the offer—great. Wouldn't it be worth it to keep an existing customer happy? Realize that it won't become the norm, but we have to do business when our customers want to do business. Otherwise, they'll find someone who will.

Follow up. This is one of the single greatest actions we take that impresses our customers. Don't just assume that everything went great. Follow up to find out about any loose ends, misperceptions, additional paperwork needed. Follow up. With whom? The lender, the realty agent, the seller, the buyer. During the

follow up is an excellent time to thank people for their business. Ask if there is anything else they need or if there are questions that were inadvertently left unanswered. Let them know about products or services that may benefit them in the coming months. Follow up. You really can't afford not to.

One of my favorite pieces of advice is that if you want to be extraordinary, then stop being ordinary. Customers want extraordinary. Customers want you to be their business partner and a solutions provider, not an order taker. Ask them what you can do more of, what you can be better at, what you need to do differently—and if there is something you even need to do less of. Customers will tell you everything you need to know, but they're waiting for you to ask them first.

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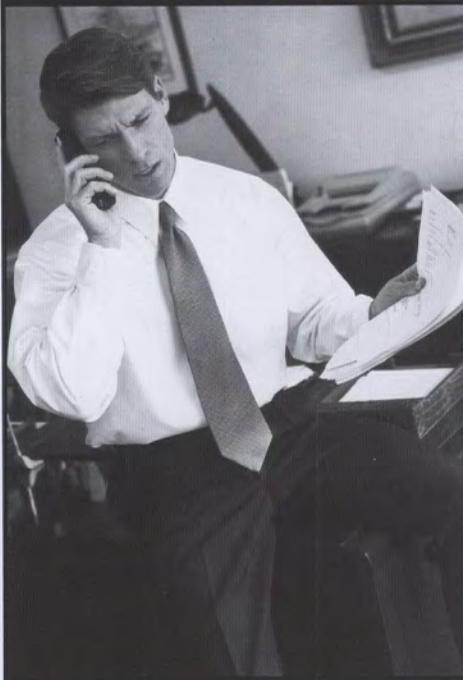
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An Industry Icon— First American's Donald P. Kennedy

Don Kennedy was recently named chairman emeritus of the First American Corporation. Here's a look at his career, which spans more than half a century of visionary leadership and dedicated service.

If there were such a thing as a Title Industry Hall of Fame, Donald P. Kennedy would certainly be one of its first inductees. Kennedy's lifetime of achievement encompasses building a small, local title company in southern California into a Fortune 500 company and one of the largest title insurance operations in the nation. It includes years of service to furthering the industry through leadership in its trade associations. And it embodies a lifetime of giving to the community.

THE EARLY DAYS

The grandson of First American's founder, C.E. Parker, Kennedy joined First American as associate counsel in 1948 after completing law school and serving in the U.S. Navy in World War II.

During the post-war era, southern California experienced a real estate boom that quickly propelled First American into becoming the largest title company in Orange County, CA. Kennedy quickly saw the need to serve the area's large builders and customers, or the company might be swallowed up by those who could. So he convinced his board of directors to acquire operations in adjacent Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

The company then began acquiring title businesses, first in neighboring states, then the East Coast, and finally

Kennedy's Peers Speak Out

Throughout his career, Kennedy has earned the highest respect among his peers. Several former ALTA presidents comment here on their perceptions of the man.

"Don took on the ALTA presidency with a strong sense of commitment, giving a lot of his time and energy. With Don, you always knew that business was business, but he tempered that with a great sense of humor. He's knowledgeable, smart, very genuine, and an all-around great guy. I considered him my mentor."

**Jack Rattikin, Jr., Chairman, Rattikin Title Company, Ft. Worth, TX
President, ALTA (1984-85)**

"I first met Don some 40 years ago. I've worked with him, been his competitor, and spent a number years with him on the ALTA Executive Committee. In all those relationships, I valued and enjoyed his friendship. I've never known a person who enjoyed what he did as much as Don always has. And I know of no other person who, 40 years ago, approached his sense of where the title insurance industry was going. Still, his greatest virtue always has been that he—as did I—married much above himself."

J.L. "Jim" Boren, Jr., Former Chairman and CEO, Mid-South Title Insurance Corporation

**Former SVP, Lawyers Title Insurance Corporation
President, ALTA (1980-81)**

"I consider Don a great friend. He's a brilliant man, and a good problem solver. He's able to be serious when needed, but also able to see the humor in difficult situations, without being flippant. He just has the ability to keep things in perspective."

**Robert Bates, Former EVP and General Counsel, Chicago Title & Trust
President, ALTA (1979-80)**

"Don is a real powerhouse, and smarter than a whip. He says what he thinks. Yet I'll always remember that no matter how serious the situation, he'd always have that glint in his eye. He had the ability not to let details get in the way, and he always kept his eye on the big picture. Don is truly one of the great guys of title insurance."

"I remember when Don flew out to meet with me to buy my company. One of his utmost concerns was for our employees—not only the transition, but also wanting to assure them that their benefits wouldn't change. That really impressed me."

**Roger Bell, Former President, Security Abstract & Title, Wichita, KS
President, ALTA (1978-79)**



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inside the industry



Kennedy says the process of bundling services is going to happen whether or not RESPA reform is reintroduced.

states in between, leading First American to become one of the largest title insurance companies in the country. The company went public in 1964, trading on NASDAQ until 1993, when it moved to the New York Stock Exchange.

First American's expansion into global markets began with Mexico and the United Kingdom. Later, First American became the only title insurance company in Australia, the largest in Canada, and the first in South Korea and Hong Kong. The company was also the innovator of the world's first international title insurance policy.

"I can think of no executive who

has done more for any company," says Parker Kennedy, Don Kennedy's son and chairman of the board, president and CEO of First American. "Under his leadership, the company moved into new states, new countries, and new businesses. Through it all, he has been a tremendous boss to us all, and we are fortunate that he will continue to provide counsel as a board member."

AN INNOVATOR FOR CHANGE

Very early on, Kennedy was committed to the idea that the title process could be much more responsive to its customers. As he rose through the ranks at First American, he worked to integrate advanced information technology that made the title process faster, more accurate, and less costly. As a result, order processing that used to take two or three weeks was accomplished in days. Over subsequent years, the processes that had been reduced to a few days' time came to be done in minutes or seconds.

As First American grew, Kennedy foresaw the need to diversify, and engineered the acquisition of a trust company, a home warranty provider, and a real estate tax service firm. Further efforts led to the acquisition of a collection of fast-growing businesses not subject to real estate cycles.

Kennedy built a reputation for knowing when and where to expand and how to attract the right people.

He initiated a decentralized system of management to give his people the autonomy to run their company or division as if it were their own—a strategy that has proved extremely successful.

Kennedy has always been a man of vision, searching out new ways to improve traditional processes and making plans to grow when others thought things couldn't—or shouldn't—be done. It is a spirit that has shaped First American into one of the largest and most respected companies in the title industry and in the nation.

Yet Kennedy credits others for the company's success. "The real strength behind First American is our people," says Kennedy. "We have made it through some tough times and come out stronger for it. I am consistently amazed by the talent and dedication of the great people we have in our company. They are a real source of pride to me."

AN INDUSTRY LEADER

Kennedy's vision and determination have not only revolutionized a company, but also helped to influence many of the advancements and practices that are commonplace in the title industry today—national coverage, international operations, integrated technology—going beyond traditional boundaries to meet client demand for faster, better, and less-expensive services.

Promoted to Vice President of First American



First American revenues reach \$585,989

Begins expansion program and soon establishes offices in adjacent California counties



Promoted to Executive Vice President of First American

Appointed President of First American

Serves as President of the California Land Title Association



First American revenues reach \$9.6 million

1951

1957

1958

1959

1963

inside the industry

Kennedy's commitment to the title industry encompasses years of service to the professional associations that have fueled its progress and change. He was president of the California Land Title Association in 1960, and served as ALTA's president in 1983.

One of Kennedy's initial moves as ALTA president was to hire James R. Maher as its first in-house general counsel. Maher, who now serves as ALTA's executive vice president, says Kennedy knew the direction ALTA needed to take.

"Just as he understood the need for First American to grow and expand nationwide, he understood the need for a new ALTA, and he laid the groundwork for the organization to evolve," says Maher. "He definitely had a vision of a reinvigorated ALTA with a stronger Washington, D.C., lobbying presence, and greater resources to support a much larger title industry of the future."

Kennedy is a firm believer in ALTA and its mission to keep members apprised of government actions that affect their business. "Most companies can't afford to hire people to do this, and ALTA does an admirable job," says Kennedy.

During his term as ALTA's president, Kennedy dealt with some meaty issues—the deregulation of financial institutions and amendments to RESPA's Section 8 (anti-kickback provisions), to name a few.

"Deregulation caused substantial confusion in the marketplace at that time," says Kennedy. "Banks wanted to use deposits to go into unrelated businesses, insurance companies wanted to become banks, and banks wanted to go into the insurance business. And retail merchants and stockbrokers wanted to be everything, preferably without regulation."

Kennedy and others attended committee meetings and hearings to lobby against deregulation, a fight they ultimately lost. But Kennedy says the results have not been all bad.

"Regardless of whatever happens in the marketplace, the business of title insurance will always be essential to the smooth operation of real estate transactions," says Kennedy. "The need for title insurance has not changed one iota—what has changed is the way we produce and deliver the product, and it's still changing."

The U.S. has the best system in place for the transfer and conveyance of real estate, says Kennedy. No other country has the infrastructure that we do—an infrastructure that makes title insurance possible. In fact, many countries such as China, the Philippines, and Russia are looking to U.S. firms to help them get started, he noted.

"Title insurance is the most effective way for real estate transactions to take place, and that holds true everywhere," says Kennedy.

Many people have described the business of title insurance in lengthy terms, but Kennedy sums it up in two sentences.

"Title insurance is the most effective way to determine that a buyer gets what he bargained for, and that the seller has what he says he has. And if we get it wrong, we make it right."

THE TITLE INDUSTRY – THEN AND NOW

From Kennedy's perspective, several trends have had a huge impact on the title business during his time. One has been the changing customer base. Where title insurers in the past dealt with lenders on strictly a local basis, the advent of large national lenders completely changed the playing field. Regardless, Kennedy still believes title insurance is a local business.

But the biggest revolution to impact the industry was the advent of technology. Computers and the ability to send documents electronically changed everything, he noted.

"In the early days, most everyone abstracted the public record and indexed it by hand, thus creating title plants and high overhead," says Kennedy. "Soon we starting sharing plants, which was met with a lot of resistance at first, but it made good business sense to share that expense to keep title insurance affordable. When it gets right down to it, there isn't really much difference in one

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Board, as First American
moves stock to New York
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Appointed
Chairman Emeritus



First American revenues
reach \$6.2 billion

1964

1983

1989

1993

2003

inside the industry

A Legacy of Giving

Kennedy's philanthropy in Southern California is well-known. With his support of literally dozens of organizations as diverse as the Boy Scouts, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the arts, educational institutions, and hospitals, it's impossible to measure the magnitude of his investment in the community. "I've always felt it was important to give something back to the community that helped foster our success," says Kennedy.

Kennedy was recently named chairman emeritus of the board of governors of the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana, CA., following three years as chairman and seven years as a member of the board. During his tenure he was instrumental in negotiating the museum's partnerships with the Smithsonian and British Museums.

Kennedy is also committed to expanding educational opportunities in the community. A trustee and benefactor of Chapman University in Orange, CA, since 1988, he currently serves as vice chairman of the board of trustees. In 1999, Chapman honored Kennedy's countless contributions with the dedication of Donald P. Kennedy Hall, a state-of-the-art teaching facility and home of the University's School of Law.

company's product from another. People tend to go to the title company they like and where they have a relationship."

On the future, Kennedy says the process of bundling services is going to happen whether or not RESPA reform is reintroduced; he sees it as a natural evolution of the industry. "There may be a period of discomfort as everyone settles in, but if government gets out of the way, our industry will do just fine."

Kennedy believes we must continue to produce the products necessary for the industry to survive and thrive, and that agents are a very important part of the process.

"They will have to continue to work harder and grow larger, but the agencies will survive," says Kennedy. "And ALTA will be a key element to the future success of our industry."

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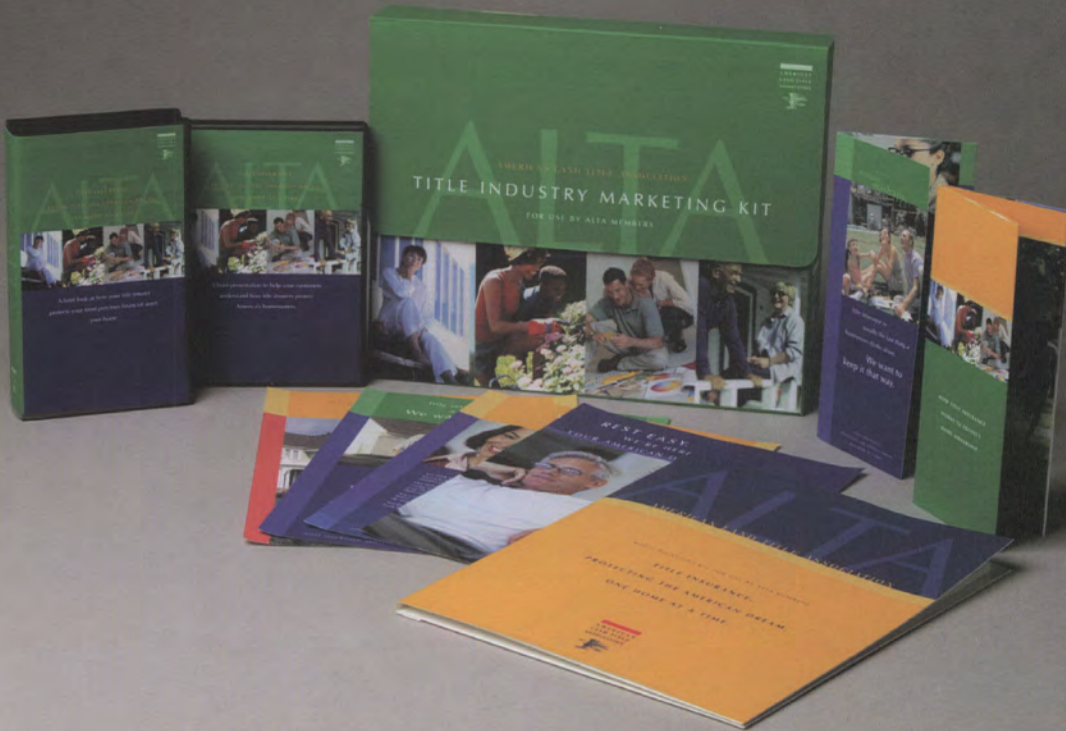
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Two Major PRIA Provisions Accepted by NCCUSL

Hard and convincing work by PRIA representatives at the March drafting session of the Uniform Real Property Electronic Recordation Act (URPERA) in Washington, D.C., resulted in two major PRIA provisions being accepted by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) for its final draft, to be voted upon in Portland, Oregon, this summer.

The significant provisions called for the majority of a state commission to be recorders (or the recording officer as prescribed by the state), and that such a state commission recognize and consult PRIA as the national standard-setting organization for electronic recording.

Led by co-chairs Helen Purcell and Carmen Bramante, along with Steve McDonald, Diana Swoboda-Peterson, David Ewan, and Bettie Johnson, PRIA'S URPERA Committee was successful in expressing concerns of PRIA's Board, most notably the deletion of a provision that would have allowed states to choose to enact statewide e-recording standards or to allow individual recording jurisdictions to enact such standards.

At last November's drafting session, NCCUSL voted to delete the allowance for local standards and only authorize standards set by a state commission.

The hard work of the PRIA contingent in March modified that vote and is all the more significant in that PRIA's representatives are classified only as "observers" at NCCUSL drafting sessions.

When finalized, the draft will be available at www.nccusl.org.

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Durham, NC 27715-3159
(919) 433-0121
www.pria.us
Michael R. Borden
coordinator@pria.us



NCCUSL Drafts Mortgage Satisfaction Act

By Kate Teal

A drafting committee appointed by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (NCCUSL) is preparing a Uniform Mortgage Satisfaction Act.

The committee met in January to review the draft that was amended as a result of a November committee meeting. The latest draft is available for review on PRIA's Web site at taskforce.cifnet.com/priaus/mortgagesatisfaction/MortSatis_Jan04_MtgDraft.pdf.

In its work on the proposed Mortgage Act, the committee has taken into consideration the current laws of release and satisfaction across the country and the impact of such laws on consumers and the mortgage business.

The committee is seeking to establish uniformity in the recording requirements for satisfactions, including: (1) the time required to record a satisfaction of a security instrument after receiving full payment; (2) the penalties imposed for noncompliance with the requirement to properly record within a specific time period; and (3) in the event of noncompliance to record a satisfaction, the time at which an aggrieved debtor may follow a nonjudicial satisfaction process and the requirements of such a process. The committee is comprised of a chairperson, a reporter, commissioners of NCCUSL and observers.

A commissioner is a state-appointed individual who serves at the pleasure of the governor from whom he or she receives an appointment.

Observers include individuals who represent a sector interest group potentially affected by the enactment of a particular proposed uniform law and who adds special expertise through participation in committee meetings. To learn more about NCCUSL, visit www.nccusl.org.

Please direct any questions regarding the proposed Mortgage Satisfaction Act to Kate Teal at Ernst Publishing Co., LLC, at info@ernst.cc.

Technology Is Focus of PRIA Winter Conference

More than 180 land recording industry officials explored a wide variety of issues brought on by new technology, including privacy, paperless recording, and standards for electronic documents at PRIA's Winter Conference February 25-26 in Washington, D.C.

The conference also included sessions on privacy, real estate law, standards, and a presentation on electronic notarization and a demonstration of the new Electronic Notary Journal of Official Acts (Enjoa™) by the National Notary Association.

Privacy Access Workgroup co-chair Mark Ladd said he got "incredible feedback" from attendees at the presentation on privacy and open records. "The consensus seemed to be that attendees wanted legislation that puts the burden on the preparer not to put sensitive information on the document," he said. "We're looking for points of consensus in the discussion to take to the PRIA board for adoption."

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member news

Movers & Shakers

ARIZONA

Judy Danley has been promoted to Lake Havasu City branch manager for LandAmerica/Transnation Title Insurance Company, Lake Havasu City. She has more than 30 years experience in the industry.



CALIFORNIA

Paul M. Doman has assumed the position of vice president-national home equity counsel for First American Title Insurance Company, Santa Ana. Doman joined First American in 1995 and previously served as general counsel of First American Home Equity Loan Services, Inc. in Cleveland, OH.

ILLINOIS

Patricia McConnell joined Tigor Title Insurance Company, Chicago, as commercial account manager. Prior to joining Tigor Title, McConnell was the National Sales Director for International Land Services.



MINNESOTA

R. Wayne Shupe has been elected to the position of president and chief operating officer of Old Republic Title Holding Company and all its subsidiaries. He will also continue to serve as the company's executive vice president and regional manager of several counties in California. He has been with Old Republic for nearly a decade.



NORTH CAROLINA

George Snead has been promoted to executive vice president-national markets for Investors Title Insurance Company, Chapel Hill. He joined the company in 1999 as senior vice president-marketing.



OHIO

Nichole Otto has been named sales representative for First American Title/Midland Celtic Title's eastern Columbus region. Prior to this position, Otto worked as sales representative for another Central Ohio title agency.



TEXAS

David A. Priestley has been named chief financial officer for Centex Title & Insurance Group, Dallas. He has been with Centex Title since 2001, most recently as senior vice president.



Jack Rattikin III has been promoted to chief executive officer of Rattikin Title Company, Fort Worth. Rattikin joined the company in 1983 and most recently served as president. He replaces Jack Rattikin, Jr., who will continue as chairman of the board.

Steven J. Tierney has been appointed vice president, regional counsel for Stewart Title Guaranty Company, Houston. He has more than 26 years of title industry experience.



NEW ALTA MEMBERS

ACTIVE MEMBERS

Alabama

Sheila Lambert
Tillman, Allen, & Sizemore, LLC
Ashville

Lynda Bradley
Eufaula

Arkansas

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Conway

Charles Cravens
Cravens Abstract & Title
Paris

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Lloyd Pace
JMT Document Services
Visalia

Connecticut

Owen Carbrey
Carbrey Land Record Services
Hamden

Lewis Whitehead
Whitehead Title, LLC
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Kathleen Hoerner
Boulevard Title, LLC
West Hartford

Florida

Nick Vittorio
Bonifay Abstract & Title Co.
Bonifay

H. Lee Mills
Wilson Abstract & Title Insurance Co.
Bronson

Andrew Ponnock
Titleco International, Inc.
Coral Springs

Carol Langdon
Langdon & Langdon Research, Inc.
Destin

member news

VIRGINIA

Jonny Johnson has been promoted to senior vice president—human resources for LandAmerica Financial Group, Inc., Richmond. Johnson joined LandAmerica in 1998 and previously served as director—compensation and benefits.

Kudos

Three ALTA Members Named Most Admired Companies

LandAmerica Financial Group, Fidelity National Financial, and First American were named Most Admired Companies by *Fortune* magazine in the Mortgage Services Industry category. To obtain these ratings, the research firm the Hay Group started with the ten largest companies by revenue in 64 industries, then asked 10,000 executives, directors, and securities analysts to rate the companies in their own industries on eight criteria, using a scale of one to ten. For more information see the March 8th issue of *Fortune* magazine.

Charles Jones Wins Gold and Silver

Charles Jones, LLC, has received the Gold and Silver awards for three submissions to the Service Industry Advertising Awards. It received a Gold award for its Patriot Name Search mouse pad, and a Silver award for its Signature Ad mouse pad in the Imprinted Materials Category - Real Estate Group. Charles Jones also received a Gold award for its Signature print ad in the Magazine Advertising/Single Ad Category - Real Estate Group. Details: Linda Martin, 800-792-8888

Mergers & Acquisitions

First American Title Insurance Co. has agreed to acquire Pacific Northwest Title Holding Company and its subsidiaries, Seattle. First American also acquired a 60% ownership position in Island Title Corp. of Honolulu.

First American Title Insurance

Company of New York has acquired the remaining ownership interest in Public Abstract Corporation headquarters in Rochester, NY.

Stewart Title of California has acquired the remaining 20% interest in the Cuesta Title offices in Tulare and Kings counties of California. In addition, Stewart Title has acquired a majority interest in Stewart Title of Pueblo, CO. Stewart Title of Pueblo acquired First American Title Company of Southern Colorado.

New Offices

First American/Midland Title opened a new office in Beaver Creek, OH, the sixth office in the Dayton/Cincinnati area.

NEW ALTA MEMBERS

Florida, cont.

Barbara Wood

Southern Homes & Land, Inc.
Hernando

Sharon Kaselitz

JSR of Florida, Inc.
Holiday

Terri Francis

Preferred Realty Title Agency, Inc.
Jacksonville

Marjorie Altidor

Chase Title Company
Miami

Linda Lozano

L & L Abstract
Niceville

Evelyn Cary

Pinellas Park Title Co.
Pinellas Park

Florida, cont.

Susan Stanina

Diamond Title of Pinellas Inc.
Seminole

Gary Jerome

Accu-Search Title Examination
Tampa

Kristopher Fernandez

South Tampa Title Co.
Tampa

Sue Wilson

Superior Land Title
Tavares

Sheree' Akins

A & A Title Insurance Agency, Inc.
Zephyrhills

Georgia

Justin McKinney

1 Above Title Company, Inc.
Decatur

Russell Henderson

Georgia Title Resources Corp.
Duluth

John Davis

T S A E, Inc.
Fairmount

Paul Youngblood

Tara Title
Locust Grove

Randall W. Nowlin

Marietta

Kip Dooley

Kip's Title Works
Powder Springs

Monica Cunningham

Quality Binder Solutions, LLC
Powder Springs

Angela Gore

Villa Rica

Marcus W. Crabtree

Woodstock

Illinois

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Kim Rutherford

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Elizabethtown

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Indiana Title Network Company
Crown Point

Scott Haub
Greenville

Iowa

Pamela O'Leary
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Algona

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Covenant Title & Escrow, LLC
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Kentucky

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Flagship Title Corp.
Lexington

Steve Grundy
Grundy Abstracts
Louisville

Marc Yussman
IBC Title Services, Inc.
Louisville

Sharyle Hoffman
Park Hills

Kathy Grant
Grant Reporting Service
Science Hill

Louisiana

Laura Franklin
Area Abstract
Alexandria

Michael Grace
Commerce Title & Abstract Co.
Baton Rouge

Randy Roussel
Phelps Dunbar, LLP
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Sidney Torres
Property Title, Inc.
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John Robichaux
Ironclad Title, L.L.C.
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Andrea M. Boland Title Examiner
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DeSimone Title Agency
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Corey McClelland
Timely Services
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Clear Title Inc.
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Alpine Title of New England, LLC
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Barbara Krogmann
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Angela Mandarino
East Coast Settlement Services
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N. Babylon

Teresa Schifano

Priority One Title Agency, Inc.
Selden

Jo-Ann Cambareri, P.C.

Tarrytown

North Carolina

Michael Wekall

Colonial Title Company
Charlotte

Paul O'Connor

Accurate Title Group
Cornelius

Thomas Rybak

Eastern Title Insurance
High Point

Michael Park

Regional Title
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Patricia Butera

First Southern Title Agency, Inc.
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Tony Faust

United Title, LLC
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Timothy Maurer

Wexford Title Agency, Inc.
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Marcus Campbell

First Assurance Title Agency
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Greater Columbus Title
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Terry Gentner

Independent Abstract Services
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Brockway

Amy Tennessen

Hometown Abstract Co.
Milford

William Yurron

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Stewartstown

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Birmingham

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Courthouse Data
Fayetteville

California

Mike Armstrong
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Cynthia E. Renner
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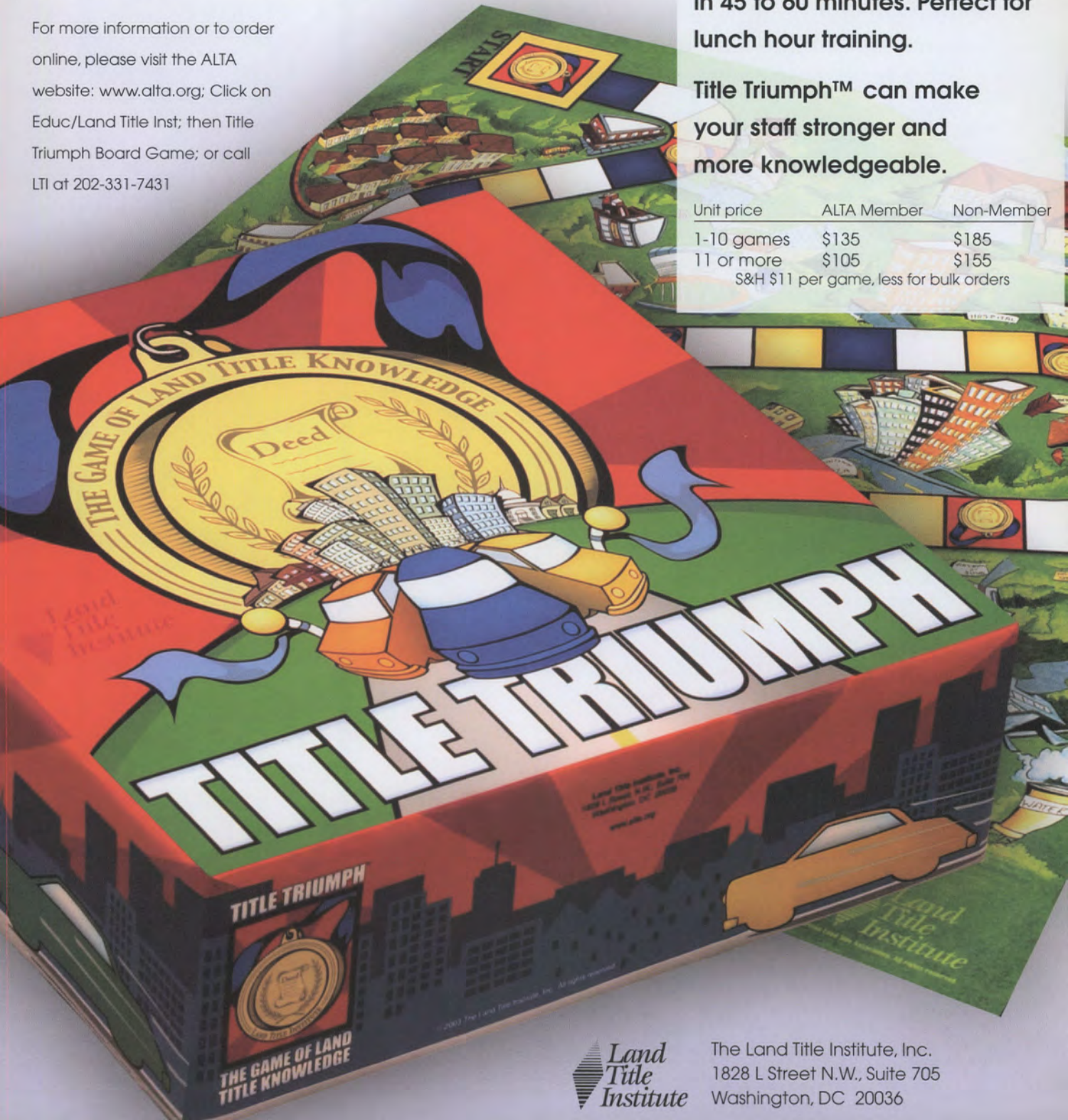
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Marketplace

Situations wanted or help wanted ads are \$80 for the first 50 words, \$1 for each additional word, 130 words maximum. Insertion rate drops to \$70 for first 50 words for three or more consecutive placements. For sale or wanted to buy ads are \$250 for 50 words, \$1 for each additional word, 130 words maximum. Insertion rate drops to \$225 for 50 words for three or more consecutive placements. Placing a box around an ad costs an extra \$20 for help wanted or situations wanted, \$50 for sale or wanted to buy. Blind-box service available upon request.

To place a classified ad in Marketplace, send ad copy and check made payable to American Land Title Association to: Title News Marketplace, ALTA, 1828 L Street, N.W., Suite 705, Washington, DC 20036.

SAMPLE: HELP WANTED

Lead Abstractor wanted for three-county Kansas operation. Must be licensed or comparably qualified. Send resume, particulars, to PO Box 888, Kansas City, KS

SAMPLE: SALE

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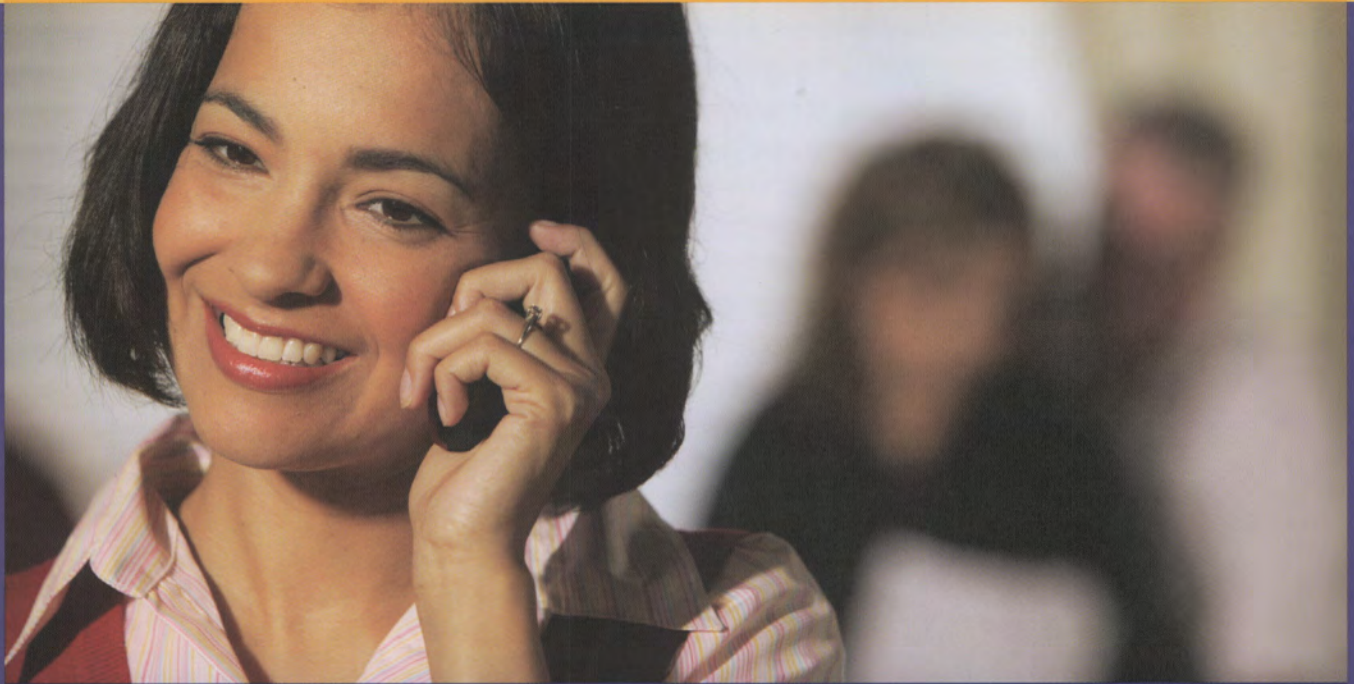


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