

# industry summit

Your industry's future in focus

**REINSW INDUSTRY SUMMIT**

Thursday, 27 November 2015

*Update #1*

Where is the profession heading in 2016? What will the profession look like in 2020? Will digital rule our world? Or will relevant, specialised and meaningful human interaction still be valued above all else?

These were the questions posed to over 100 industry leaders at REINSW's third annual Industry Summit on 27 November 2015.

After the success of the first two Summits, the 2015 event again provided an open environment for industry figures to voice their opinions on the issues, challenges and trends impacting the industry and profession. The delegates were encouraged to raise fresh ideas and engage in healthy debate.

One of the standout issues facing the profession is digital disruption, and the threat that it poses – but also the opportunities it offers for those who can adapt.

The Summit focused on seven key strategies to help the profession meet the challenge of digital disruption. The discussion points put forward by delegates are summarised below

## 1. The rapid rate of change

*How can technology be used to help the profession to move forward?*

Technology has very quickly become central to everything that we do. The release of the iPhone in 2007 allowed anyone to have access to the web in the palm of their hand – anywhere, anytime.

Since then the rate of change has been rapid, and it is accelerating. Businesses need to adapt to this rapid change, or they will soon be left behind. For this reason it is important for the real estate profession to embrace the opportunity to change, and to use the challenges posed by digital disruption as an opportunity to adapt and move forward.



## 2. Educating the agents of the future

*How should a national real estate body come together to best benefit the industry?*

- **Education standards**  
Delegates were united in the view that education standards need to be vastly improved. Indeed, in order for the profession to survive the challenges of disruption, it was unanimously agreed that significantly improving education standards is critical.
- **Education and consumers**  
Allowing the government to 'dumb down' education standards has been a lose-lose situation. Consumers lose because they are not receiving a service they expect and deserve, and agents lose because the reputation of the profession is tarnished.

## 3. Viewing the industry differently

*Does the industry consist of just real estate agents?*

- **The real estate ecosystem**  
In order to meet the challenges of disruption, delegates said that we need to change the way we view the industry. Online media, print media, web portals, technology suppliers, data suppliers and many other stakeholders are all part of the real estate industry – in fact it's a real estate 'ecosystem'.
- **A united front**  
Gone are the days when the profession could afford to work in silos. The entire real estate ecosystem needs to work together in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for consumers, agents, suppliers and other stakeholders.



## 4. Providing clients with choice

*Why does the one-size-fits all approach no longer apply?*

Delegates were vocal about the fact that the profession can no longer afford to offer a one-size-fits-all service. While one client may want an agent to provide an end-to-end service including everything from property styling and photography through to organising removals and utility connections, another may want an “a la carte” service where they can pick and choose the things they want the agent to do.

Consumers expect choice, so agents need to reinvent their service offering to give them that choice. Agents need to adjust their mindset to allow consumers to choose the level of service they want.

## 5. Catering for micro-moments

*What can the profession do to take advantage of micro-moments?*

Consumers now have a wealth of information at their fingertips. However delegates agreed that more does not necessarily equal better. Information is only powerful if the consumer knows how to interpret it in a way that is meaningful and relevant to their situation. This is where agents can step in as advisors and provide real value to the relationship with their clients. Agents need to become the educators, and help their clients navigate their way through all the ‘noise’ and make the right decisions.

## 5. Positioning agents as educators

*Consumers now have a wealth of information at their fingertips, so what does this mean for agents?*

Whether we are waiting in line at the supermarket checkout, filling up our car at the petrol station or sitting on the bus or train on the way to work, we don't waste a moment. We are on our smartphones and mobile devices checking emails, surfing the internet or looking at our social media feeds. These micro-moments are how we consume information. Therefore, to communicate effectively with consumers, agents need to cater for these micro-moments and ensure that they are delivering information in such a way that it can be consumed in a short space of time – and in an engaging way.



## 7. Preserving the human element

*Do consumers still value the human element?*

Real estate has been, and always will be, about relationships. Delegates agreed that digital disruption will not change that. As more and more disruptors enter the space, the agents who focus on building and retaining strong, valuable and longstanding relationships will be the ones who survive.

### Moving forward

*What are the unknowns that need to be clarified by NSW Fair Trading?*

REINSW President John Cunningham acknowledged that there is a lot of hard work ahead. REINSW's next task is to take what was discussed at the Summit and use it to formulate the Institute's priorities in 2016.

The Summit acted as a positive first step, and REINSW is committed to working with agents and the wider industry ecosystem to drive reform, lift standards, increase professionalism and shape the future of our industry and profession.

