

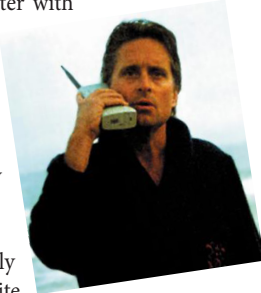
ROXANA TOFAN
roxana@clearintegritygroup.com

Roxana Tofan, CPM® is the Owner/Broker at Clear Integrity Group LLC in San Antonio



The Impact of Technology on Real Estate

Do you remember your first desktop computer with the bulky monitor? What about your first two-and-a-half-pound cell phone that could only be used for 20 minutes before the battery died? Whether you've been in real estate for five years or twenty-five years, working residential or commercial, technology has no doubt changed the way we do business.



Helping a client look for a property used to involve weekly printed MLS books, newspaper ads and black and white dot matrix printers. If something needed to be signed, we had to schedule a meeting, use snail mail or drop off to other agents. When things evolved to getting MLS at home or the office on our computers through a phone cable and using faxes, we adapted quickly and appreciated the benefits of being able to have a broader reach. Today it is even more than that.



We no longer have to check for a new property that matches certain criteria every morning; instead we have automatic emails setup for different clients that alert us when a new property comes on the market. We don't meet the other agent at the property with a key or put the key in a combo key box; we use electronic boxes that tell us who was at the property and how long they were there.

We don't have to wait for printing advertising with a list of properties available but can search for new properties online using our laptops, tablets and phones. Sending information to clients has become very easy via text and email, and documents and contracts can be signed immediately via secured systems that allow our clients to electronically sign and speed deals.

In the world of property management, budget lines are easily adjustable, moving dollars from office staff to software and online marketing. Most of our tenants not only pay online but they expect to have that option. They don't want to call the management office; rather they want to submit their payment and maintenance requests online and access their ledger at any time via the resident portal, rather they expect to be able to email any requests or questions at any time of the day. Leasing property means ensuring excellent online presence for renters who now look on their own and expect instant responses.



The Expectation is for an Immediate Answer

Buyers, renters, investors now insist on faster responses and increased access to their real estate agents and brokers. Waiting 24 hours to respond is no longer acceptable or prospects/clients will find another agent or property. While most important

discussions regarding a transaction are best handled in face-to-face meetings or phone calls, most clients prefer text messaging and email to communicate unimportant items such as confirming a meeting time or receipt of an email. Whether in leasing or sales, being responsive can be the most important task of your job today so ensuring you have the right systems in place is essential.

New apps and websites are completely changing the way we do business, for buyers, renters and for real estate agents. Technology has made our jobs easier, more efficient, more transparent. Instead of a lot of administrative work, we focus on marketing, response time and online access. Instead of phone calls and visits, we communicate at lightning-speed with prospects and clients through websites, Facebook pages, tweets and e-mails. We use our phones and tablets and take advantages of Google Maps, Mortgage Calculator, Cam Scanner, Dropbox, Dotloop, RPR and more.



Information is no longer a tool in our arsenal. The information is easily accessible to anyone. Now, more than ever, what we need to provide is guidance and negotiation skills.

In a world where virtual communication governs most of our interactions with others, we might consider face-to-face communication an outdated practice. However, a face-to-face meeting provides the opportunity to make a stronger and more personal connection with clients, create a more personalized and vivid experience and to assist them in making the decision to purchase/lease – *through you*. In situations where a client may need some persuasion, personal interaction is critical.

The ability to communicate is a quality demonstrated by the best of the best. Devote your time to best serve your clients. Communicate with them, thereby conveying the message that you will work harder and your time will be better spent in serving their needs than will that of your competitors.

Technology in real estate has allowed us to do more and be more for our clients but it has also raised the bar and become the marketplace more competitive. Keeping up with the latest technology is more crucial than ever, but clients expect you to provide them with a lot more than that, with expertise and guidance that they can not find online. Don't forget that your clients count on you to be knowledgeable, organized with attention to detail, tenacious, aggressive with a positive attitude, responsive and an expert in the real estate industry.

American Gothic is a painting by Grant Wood inspired from what is now known as the American Gothic House, and the artist's decision to paint the house along with "the kind of people I fancied should live in that house." The figures were modeled by the artist's sister and their dentist. It is one of the most familiar images in 20th-century American art, and has been widely parodied in American popular culture.

DIVERSIONS
American Gothic

