My Experience at the VLTA Annual Convention

Description

When my new friend John asked me to write an article for the Examiner about my experience at the VLTA 2023 Annual Convention, I initially said â??no, thanksâ?• as a matter of course to try to get a laugh. But I immediately started thinking about what I would want to write about. It was unexpectedly obvious almost right away: Anitaâ??s breakfast burritos are the finest in Northern Virginia.

Kidding. I knew then in the lobby of the Hyatt that I wanted to share with you the two things that I saw every Member I met at the Convention really is at their core as a professional in this industry: an investigator and an educator.

In an age of black-box technologies and so many folks becoming increasingly comfortable with having software do more and more thinking for them, everyone I met had, and told stories, that showed VLTA members are dedicated to tirelessly searching, reading, asking, poking, and then rinsing & repeating all that again to gather all the facts wherever they may be tucked away. We all knit these facts together into the story of how we got here. Weâ??re all chasing history, and, in my view, there arenâ??t many other things that are as important for the future as the real story of the past. Jen Skrabakâ??s opening CE session on The Life of a Title Abstract crystalized it beautifully for me right out of the gate. I found the VLTA membership I met at the Convention to be a body of folks who know, and wonâ??t let anyone forget, the power of *understanding â??whyâ?• questions*. It is an unfortunately rare and precious quality, and absolutely vital for *the species*, let alone the industry. All I hope for from all of you, from all of us, is to keep chasing, keep searching, keep pushing, and never let up.

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Getting through settlement can be complicated. Most buyers and sellers donâ??t know much about what they need to do or how their transaction works, whether itâ??s their first transaction or not, because most folks buy and sell so infrequently. Real estate agents have turnover like any other industry, and that may get more interesting in the wake of recent and forthcoming lawsuits involving the National Association of Realtors, and agents may not see behind the scenes after a ratified contract anyway, so folks look to the Membership for some of the most important institutional knowledge. Processes and requirements change as the housing market evolves, and every state does things a little differently. The risks around the various options for moving funds are greater than ever before, regardless of the payment rail(s). Digitalization has permeated what had been a staunch pen-and-paper industry. Translation: *everyone involved in title transactions needs more education than ever* to realize successful outcomes. Everyone. Buyers and sellers in particular need to know whatâ??s going on to be comfortable with what is probably the largest investment or transaction of their lives at any given time. But now thereâ??s more to understand, and the knowledge gap is harder to bridge. To me, being an educator isnâ??t just about helping someone. It is helping by demonstrating and communicating so effectively that the audience retains the information and *can apply it themselves* in the future. Like Mary Poppins, VLTA members dig into their bags and pull out that hat to educate. Iâ??m not saying itâ??s fun. All of the stories I heard at the Convention and continue to hear from our colleagues every week make that clear. Itâ??s hard, and itâ??s going to continue to be hard. I think that may be because so many are content to kind of say â??not my circus, not my monkeysâ?• and not put the effort into teaching. But Iâ??m thankful for how many people I met that wonâ??t pass the buck, who take on the

challenge and the responsibility every day. To me, education is ensuring a rising tide happens in order to raise all boats. I thank you, and Iâ??m proud to work with you and serve our communities through education, leaving them better than we found them. ALSO, I MET DOLLY PARTON! So sparkly. That was definitely her, right? Right?

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Matt Lindner
Matthew Lindner is the Managing Member and Co-owner of First Virginia Title and Escrow, LLC in Williamsburg, Virginia and is a Title Insurance Producer licensed in Virginia. Matt is the VLTA Legislative Director, and member of the Board.

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vltaexaminer

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