My VLTA Convention Experience

Description

Iâ??m not going to lie, I wasnâ??t expecting to see Kevin Pogoda in a mullet at my first VLTA conference.

I first want to thank those involved with VLTA that granted me the Ronald Donn Scholarship Award, and I want to give a special shout-out to Stephanie Campbell who made sure that I knew that it was available to apply for!

Now, Iâ??m not new to the convention â??sceneâ?•: I traveled all over the U.S. in my prior life in an administrative role for a publishing company, attending conferences, putting on presentations of my own, and rubbing elbows with people from all walks of life and experience. However, VLTA was so very different from those events. In the creative and cutthroat world that is publishing, it always felt like everyone was trying to figure out who they can use to further themselves with no regard for the well-being of the other. At VLTA, I had people coming up to me, who are *technically* our competition, wanting to truly get to know not just me, but how we can, as a group, improve this industry we are all in.

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I met many people who have offered us services that we have already integrated into our processes and workflows, which is one of the huge benefits of events like this. Sometimes, you just canâ??t know every single service or software that exists on the market, even if it would make your life so much simpler on those most difficult of files. That alone was worth the time of attendance.

In Tina Foxâ??s closing presentation, she talked about how to bring new agents into this small-in-number, but big-in-impact, industry that we are in. I truly think that is the million-dollar question that I took out of the weekend, and something that I am still pondering. So many people, including people in the other parts of our industry, have no earthly idea what a title agent does, or how a settlement agent brings everyone together to that final meeting at the tableâ?¦I surely didnâ??t, when starting in this field in 2020.

I donâ??t know if I have an answer to how to bring people into the field, but I do have some ideas for how to make our industry more understood by those we work with the most in lenders and real estate agents. Itâ??s all about bringing education to them.

Letâ??s face it. How many professionals do you know that have to get some sort of continuing education credits every year or every few years, who do the bare minimum number of hours, and usually get them last minute? I know I could probably fill the ballroom of the Marriott with real estate agents *alone* who do this. (I feel I can harp on real estate agents, as my partner is one.) However, even those that have been in the real estate industry for decades often couldnâ??t explain what an easement was, or even what the settlement and title agents that they work with do! Its been one of my personal missions to try to correct that to the best of my ability in the market that we serve. We may get a lot of continuing education from VLTA and our underwriters, but it seems rare that we pass that education, at least in part, to our network of business. I feel like the more education that we can provide, the better sources of business those parties become, and the more we all flourish.

I left the weekend with a lot to think about, but I also left with a desire to better myself in the industry. I will do everything in my power to continue to attend the VLTA conferences, and Iâ??m looking at trying to attend the ALTA One conference as well. Iâ??m looking at more education that I can get as an agent to not help my own office and clients, but also help the association as a whole.

But, letâ??s face it, weâ??re *really* all going next year to see what Kevin wears to the party, right?

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Michael Godsey entered the real estate industry in 2020 with no prior experience or training in the field. In just over four years, he rose through the ranks of Pike Title and Escrow, LLC from closing coordinator, to settlement agent, to licensed title agent, to now running the title department as manager for the quickly expanding company. His favorite part of being in this field is developing new agents into the best underwriters they can be.

Michael currently lives in Altavista, VA with his partner and dog. In his spare time, he is an avid theatregoer, traveling often to North Carolina to see traveling productions.

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vltaexaminer

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