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Bridging the gap between the growing expectations of consumers and the lack of innovation the industry has been able to deliver

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Value and support - are we delivering?

Given the generality in lack of value and support of our industry, do we deserve the bad press we get? Possibly -

- Realtors in general, do we have a bad reputation?
- As Realtors and Agents, have we not kept up with innovation?
- The real estate bubble, was it real after all?
- As an industry, how do we rank in terms of service?
- Do we agree that the internet has put information and power in the hands of the consumer!

I recently [read an article in USA Today](#) that opens with this statement, "To hear President Obama tell it, traditional travel agents have died at the hands of the internet." With the continued lack of value and support we provide to both our clients and our agents, I could not help but think when a similar statement might be made about traditional real estate brokerages given all the challenges we are faced with and the glee so many take in slamming our industry.

Without providing value and support, [are we as vulnerable as travel agents?](#)

Probably not. However, if we are not careful, we might suffer the same plight. The article points out there are almost half as many travel agencies today as there were in 2002. It also quotes the American Society of Travel Agents, stating, "U.S. travel agencies still handle more than 50% of all travel sold annually."

Can you envision a day where NAR justifies our existence by saying that we still sell half of all homes sold nationally? By no means is the article an indictment of the travel industry. What it tells us - and what we need to internalize - is that our world could look much different in coming years if we don't address the gap between consumer expectations and industry innovation. A huge disconnect exists between what our clients want from us, and what we actually deliver as an industry. And it's costing us both our reputation **AND** our bottom line.

Another quote is from an Orbitz spokesperson who talks about how **travel agents will exist as long as they provide value and support**. In the travel industry value and support means, "...Finding the best airfares, the best hotel recommendations, support in an emergency, and/or the back-office support to properly manage travel costs."

I often look outside of real estate for inspiration and ideas of what we should do differently. Although booking a vacation or business trip is certainly not the expensive and complex transaction our industry deals with, the lessons are the same. **You must deliver value and support or risk losing your market position to someone that will.** It may be Trulia or Zillow, some virtual company, or a traditional broker who has bridged the gaps you are still struggling with. Read the article and others like it to see what has happened in other industries. Study proven deliverers of awesome consumer experiences such as Apple, Nordstrom's, Starbucks, and Zappos. Look outside your industry and your comfort zone - you won't regret it!