

Zillow report: Agents want tech that saves brainpower

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Zillow's 2026 Agent Trends Survey finds ease of use now outranks cost as the leading factor agents consider when choosing new technology, while AI use becomes a daily habit for nearly half the industry

SEATTLE, Feb. 19, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Real estate agents know that time is money, yet they would sacrifice both for technology that saves them mental energy instead.

According to Zillow's 2026 Agent Trends Survey, ease of use is agents' top priority when choosing new tech tools, above both cost and time savings. Despite agents reporting they prioritize an easy-to-use platform, nearly all agents manage their workflows across multiple systems, despite ongoing innovation that could allow for simplified processes. Today, a typical agent uses between two and four tools in a typical week — a trend that has held steady over the past year.

The findings reflect the reality that many agents are navigating: Managing multiple platforms and fragmented workflows drains mental energy that could otherwise go toward serving clients. Tools that reduce cognitive load — that make the work itself simpler — allow agents to focus on what actually drives their business: relationships, responsiveness and strategic guidance.

AI is becoming a daily habit for nearly half the industry

The survey also reveals how quickly artificial intelligence has moved from experimental to essential for many agents. AI is reshaping agents' daily workflows, with nearly half of them saying they use tools like ChatGPT, Gemini or Claude at least daily. Agents on teams use these tools even more frequently than independent agents do.

But adoption is far from universal. About one-quarter of agents use AI tools less than once a week or not at all, creating a notable divide in how different segments of the industry are engaging with technology. And while agents are increasingly incorporating AI into their work, their clients haven't caught up; most agents rarely observe their clients using AI tools.

"What stands out in this data is how quickly AI has become routine for many agents, while others are barely using it at all," said Cameron Swiggett, Zillow's vice president of Product. "For agents who haven't started yet, here's the reality: AI isn't here to edge you out — it's here to give you an edge. Start small with repetitive tasks, like drafting follow-up emails or summarizing market reports. The goal is to free up mental energy so you can focus on what really matters: winning clients, deepening relationships and guiding people through the biggest financial decisions of their lives. The agents who figure this out will appear superhuman to their clients and win more deals."

Zillow Pro offers agents a unified platform powered by AI

Agents want simplicity, and Zillow® is using AI to deliver it, building tools that help agents work smarter and see stronger results. [Zillow Pro](#)SM, launching soon, unifies the tools that agents need to scale their business. It brings together buyer and seller insights that show agents when their clients are ready to take the next step; an intuitive customer relationship management experience powered by Follow Up Boss; and premium branding tools — all powered by Zillow's search data and AI.

Zillow Pro reduces the friction and mental load that come from managing multiple disconnected systems, so agents can focus on serving clients and closing transactions. Agents can join the [Zillow Pro interest list](#) to receive updates on availability.

Beyond technology, the survey highlights the enduring role agents play as trusted advisors and educators. Other key findings:

- Agents are bridging a financial literacy gap. Nearly half of agents say most new clients overestimate how much home they can afford, and very few buyers arrive with a high degree of financial literacy. About two-thirds of agents report that clients understand the basics of homeownership financing, but need detailed guidance when they first engage in the home-buying process. Zillow Home Loans' verified pre-approval helps by giving buyers a true understanding of what they can afford. That figure is now displayed next to Zillow Home Loans' BuyabilitySM tool, which allows consumers to see which for-sale homes on Zillow fit within their budget based on customized monthly payment estimates. These tools empower consumers, helping agents work with more informed clients from the start.
- Pre-approval is becoming more common, but remains inconsistent. About 50% of agents say new leads arrive with a mortgage pre-approval only some of the time, while the other half says such leads have already been

pre-approved at least half the time.

- Relationships remain agents' most powerful business driver. Nearly all agents report getting new leads from their sphere of influence, whether through repeat business or referrals from past clients. The longer an agent has been in the industry, the more powerful that network becomes.
- Agents use listing information from comparable homes when helping sellers. Three-quarters of agents report using information about the price history of comparable homes when determining the listing price for a seller's property most or all of the time, with about 42% of agents report doing so all of the time. About two-thirds of agents (67%) report using days-on-the-market stats on comparable homes when determining the listing price for a seller's property most or all of the time.

About Zillow Group:

Zillow Group, Inc. (Nasdaq: Z and ZG) is reimagining real estate to make home a reality for more and more people.

As the most visited real estate app and website in the United States, Zillow connects hundreds of millions of consumers with innovative technology, trusted agents and loan officers, and seamless digital solutions. With industry-leading tools and resources, Zillow supercharges real estate professionals so they can grow their businesses and deliver exceptional client experiences. For renters and housing providers, Zillow offers not only a robust marketplace but a set of end-to-end products and services to streamline applications, leases, payments and more.

Zillow's ecosystem spans the entire home journey — from dreaming and shopping to renting, buying, selling and financing.

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