Florida indie brokerage unveils agent tech platform, plans expansion

A tech-oriented Florida independent brokerage on Wednesday unveiled a years-in-the-making software platform for its agents as it plots an expansion across the Sunshine State.

Sean Frank

Mainframe Real Estate's platform, called Automated Back End, or ABE for short, has been in the works since 2012, company founder and CEO Sean Frank told Inman.

The platform is not exactly a customer relationship manager (CRM), though it does many of the same things: Agents using ABE can create contacts, manage leads, prospect, calculate contingencies and do other tasks.

But Frank — whose indie firm has focused on hiring high-volume agents — also said that the system is at its core "not as much a CRM as it is really robust transaction management."

"When an agent is up to their ears in business they don't need a CRM, they need transaction management," Frank added. "We really focused on those agents who aren't trying to generate business so much as those who are trying to create efficiencies."

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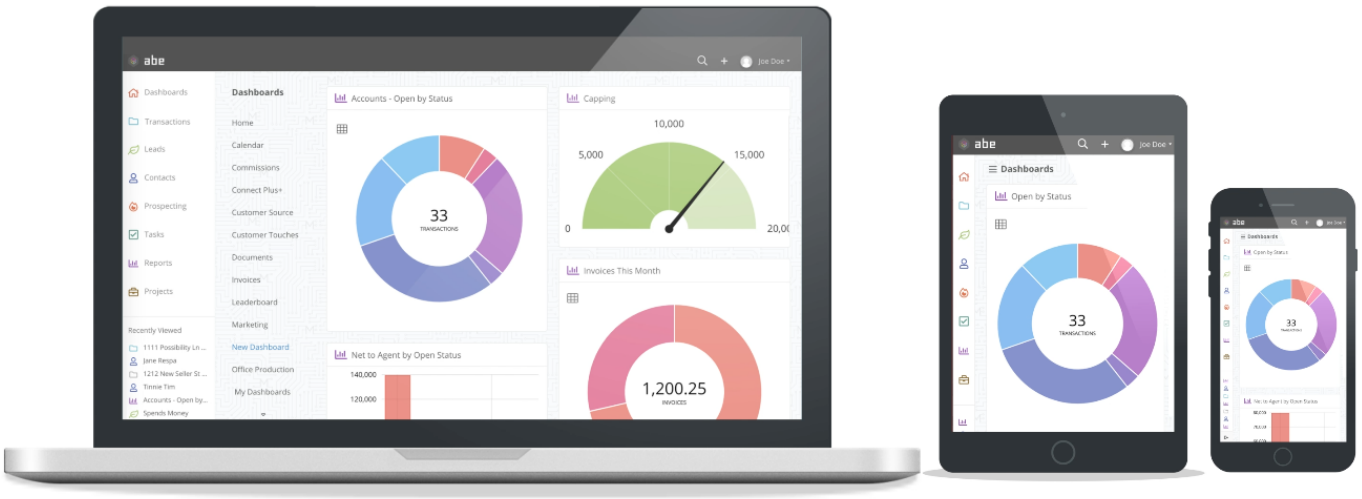
ABE also provides agents with automation and collaboration tools, e-signing software, and one-click marketing. It is designed to work on all of an agent's electronic devices.



ABE works on both computers and mobile devices | Credit: Mainframe

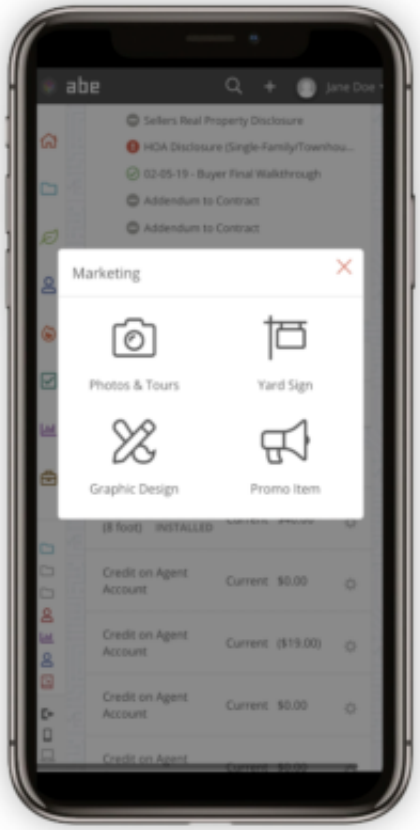
Today, Mainframe has about 50 agents. However, it only has two full-time software developers, one of whom is Frank's brother. Frank said the small software staff works because it allows the

company to be nimble, with significant new features being added to ABE “almost every week or two.”

“These companies that are trying to do it on massive scales, they make mistakes and they upset thousands of people,” Frank said. “I really believe with development you can have too many cooks in the kitchen and it can get too complicated fast.”

By comparison, Compass is well-known for hiring scores of engineers outright and for acquiring companies in order to get their developers.

Frank didn’t specifically criticize competing real estate firms, but his comments could also allude to heavyweights such as Keller Williams and Realogy, which have made massive pushes into technology in recent months.



A screenshot of Mainframe’s ABE platform | Credit: Mainframe

In the case of Mainframe, the company decided to publicly unveil its software now as it works to expand its footprint. The company is based in Orlando and operates across central Florida. Frank said Mainframe has a presence in five different multiple listing services (MLS). Last year, the company closed more than $200 million in volume.

However, Mainframe is currently eyeing expansion into the state's east coast and south. As the company finds agents that fit with its culture — "we want to work with people we like," Frank said — the plan is to initiate an incubation period before finally opening a physical office.

Frank added that Mainframe's technology also makes it especially easy for its agents to operate virtually until they get enough critical mass in a market to open a brick and mortar office.

Asked about the extent of Mainframe's expansion ambitions, Franks replied that the "sky is the limit." In the short term, the firm is focused on Florida, though Frank said expansion into other states down the road is a possibility as well if the brokerage finds the right people to work with.

In addition to unveiling its technology, Mainframe announced several other initiatives as well Wednesday, including a new marketing campaign titled "Bold Moves, Bright Agents," a new website that integrates both ABE and market reports, and a revenue sharing program for agents.

The revenue sharing program rewards agents for recruiting and pays out when someone brings even a single new person onboard. Frank said the idea was to create "something that's super achievable, considering the fact that we don't want to hire just anybody."

Update: This post was updated after publication with information from Frank on Mainframe's geographic reach in central Florida.

Email Jim Dalrymple II

Source: click here