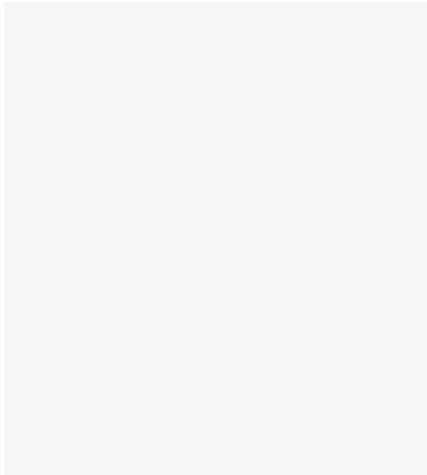


The 4 industry conferences top producers never miss

With busy schedules and set budgets, it can be challenging for agents to choose which annual conferences to attend from among the myriad options available. Which gatherings will yield the most useful learnings and the best opportunities to connect with peers?



Michael Valdes, REALOGY

There's no surefire way to know which event will deliver the greatest benefit for your practice, but one rule holds true: you get out what you put in. "I think the right conferences provide an excellent return on investment if the agent is invested in the process," says Michael Valdes, Senior Vice President of Global Servicing at REALOGY.

With investment in mind, we spoke with three leaders in real estate to hear their insights on how to make the most of any convention — and their recommendations on the industry conferences agents should have on their radars.

A conference tour de force

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One of the value-adds of conferences is that they often take you to other cities, granting you a chance to visit global real estate hubs where you may represent a property or homebuyer in the future. "Those events that have an international component to them are the most rewarding," says Valdes.

For luxury agents, here are some favorite stops on the conference circuit:

- The [National Association of REALTORS? Conference & Expo](#) is a November tradition that offers hundreds of sessions and features learnings from the industry's top experts. It's an excellent opportunity to network with both national and international peers, as the conference attracts some 1,500 global guests.
- [MIPIM](#) is high on the list for many luxury agents. The annual event takes place in March at

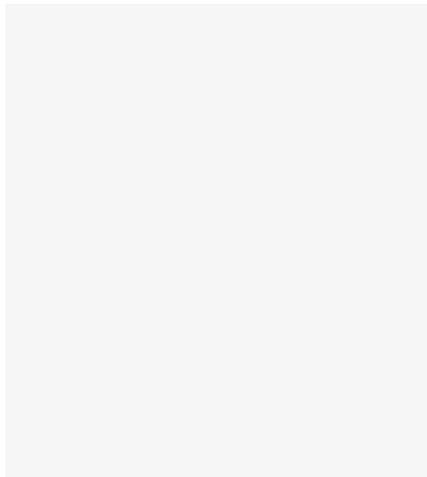
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the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France, and connects high-level professionals from across the entire real estate value chain. The nearly 27,000 participants include financial institutions and investors, developers, tech innovators, and business leaders, among many others.

- As the Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA) understands, there's an ever-growing roster of Asian luxury buyers who are investing globally in high-end real estate. The [AREAA Global & Luxury Summit](#) is therefore a unique opportunity to make inroads with this exclusive market.
- The annual [Inman](#) Luxury Connect conference is the perfect milieu for luxury agents looking to focus in on the issues that affect the higher end of the real estate market. Not only can you meet fellow luxury professionals, but break-out sessions and immersive discussions ensure that agents are receiving information and connections that can directly lead to new business. Stay an extra day or two to catch the broader Inman Connect Las Vegas conference, where franchise executives, marketers, and tech entrepreneurs all come together to trade business cards and expertise.



Tye Stockton, LIV Sotheby's International Realty

"Industry conferences have been vital to my success," says Tye Stockton, Global Real Estate Advisor with LIV Sotheby's International Realty. "In a small community like Vail, having the ability to tap into knowledge and talent outside of our market has been a great way to bring a fresh approach to my buyers and sellers."

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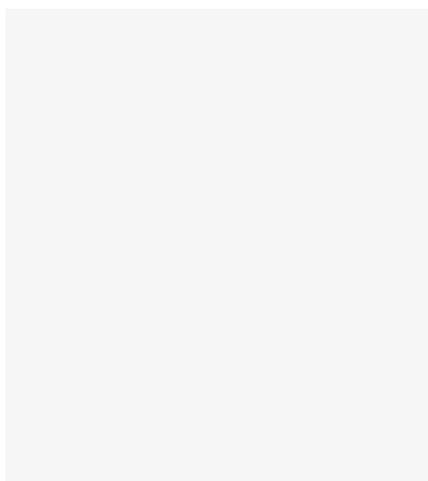
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Conferences provide an opportunity to expand your horizons — literally and figuratively — through traveling abroad and connecting with colleagues from outside your own niche. Stockton says he averages three to four conferences per year, though if you haven't been in the business for long, it can be in your best interests to register more often.

“Newer agents should be attending as much as possible, as their learning curve is more important,” notes Joel Schemmel, J.D., REALTOR® with Premier Sotheby's International Realty.

Bigger isn't always better



Joel Schemmel, J.D., Premier Sotheby's International Realty

A smaller-scale conference may not have the pomp and circumstance of the year's major events, but they can be just as educational. They're often thematically designed to target select issues, and may speak to a challenge you're experiencing in your own day-to-day.

“I have attended large and small conferences and have found the smaller regional conferences sponsored by Sotheby's International Realty Affiliates to pack in a lot of valuable information,” says Stockton. “They tend to have a meaningful and targeted message most relevant to expanding my marketing offerings and deal negotiations.”

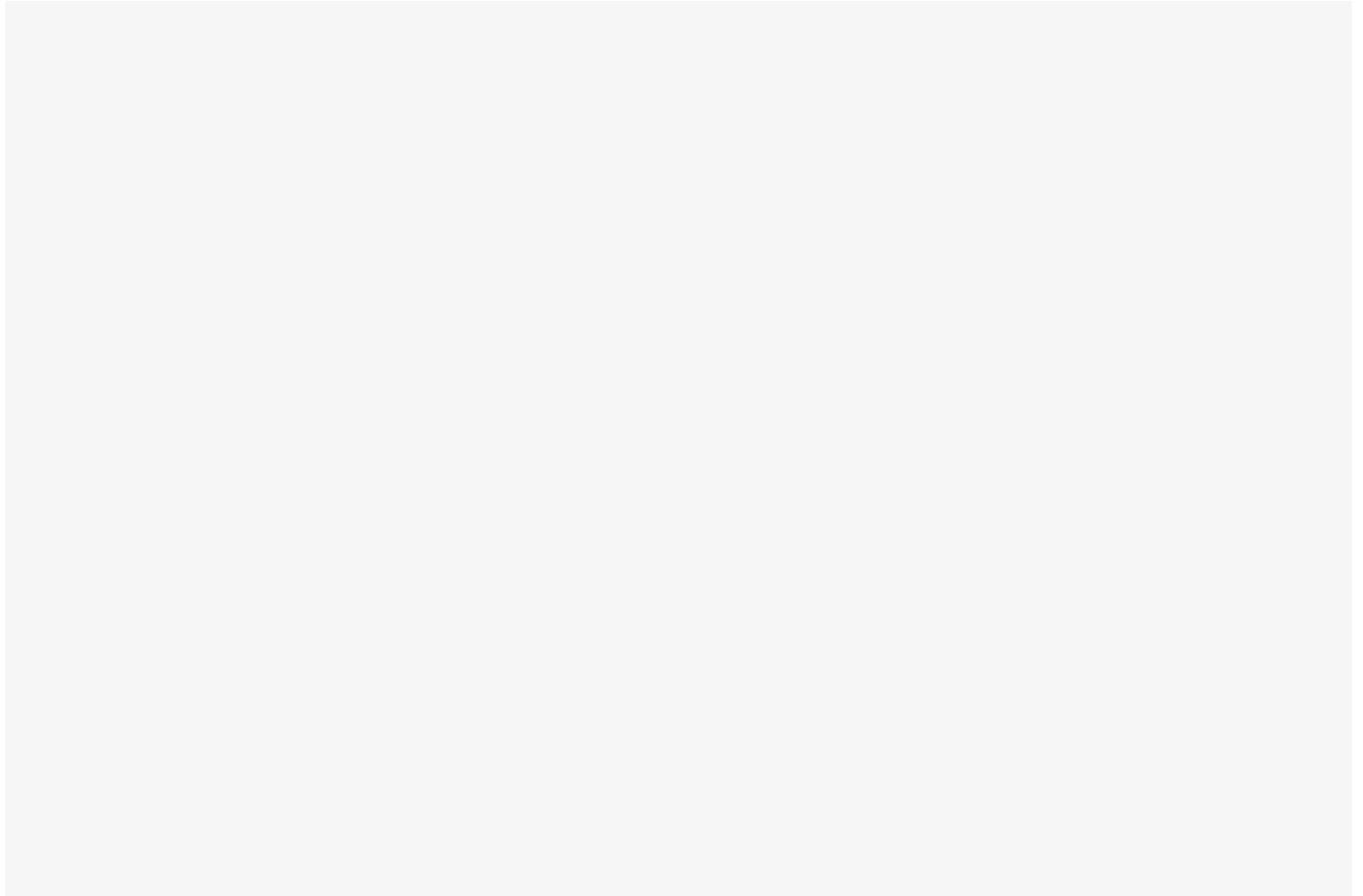
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Likewise, Schemmel is a regular at real estate seminars because of the specialized lens they provide — whether it's examining the intricacies of 1031 exchanges or working with international clients. "The most beneficial seminar I attended recently was on Ninja Selling," he recalls. "It was almost a full week, and was interesting for me, as an experienced and high-volume agent, to see how many aspects of my business could be refined."

Ask the experts



Premier Sotheby's International Realty

Networking with other agents at conferences is a good opportunity to grow your sphere of influence and lay the groundwork for future referrals. To that end, Valdes recommends seeking out agents in your direct feeder markets. But the greatest benefits are the connections you can forge with other

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industries. “Ancillary allies like finance and legal are important to have so that you can offer consumers a ‘one-stop’ deliverable,” he says. “That’s going the extra mile for a client.”

For Stockton, building these connections at conferences has been critical to his business. “I consider these contacts to be personal consultants to my business, and I stay in regular contact with several I have met,” he says. “Don’t think of conferences and networking as a referral source but rather as a best practice opportunity. What you learn will make you successful every day, unlike a referral, which may deliver a good piece of business once.”

As Schemmel points out, conferences should never be a passive exercise. “Just going and listening is not going to do it,” he says. “You need to attend with the goal of learning and building your network. Only with effort and commitment will you reap the benefits.” Most importantly, you can then share those benefits with your colleagues, your team, and of course, your clients.

About Sotheby’s International Realty

Sotheby’s International Realty was founded in 1976 as a real estate service for discerning clients of Sotheby’s auction house. Today, the company’s global footprint spans 990 offices located in 72 countries and territories worldwide, including 43 company-owned brokerage offices in key metropolitan and resort markets. In February 2004, Realogy entered into a long-term strategic alliance with Sotheby’s, the operator of the auction house. The agreement provided for the licensing of the Sotheby’s International Realty name and the development of a franchise system. The franchise system is comprised of an affiliate network, where each office is independently owned and operated. Sotheby’s International Realty supports its affiliates and agents with a host of operational, marketing, recruiting, educational and business development resources. Affiliates and agents also benefit from an association with the venerable Sotheby’s auction house, established in 1744. For more information, visit www.sothebysrealty.com.

The affiliate network is operated by Sotheby’s International Realty Affiliates LLC, and the company owned brokerages are operated by Sotheby’s International Realty, Inc. Both entities are subsidiaries of Realogy Holdings Corp. (NYSE: RLGY) a global leader in real estate franchising and provider of real estate brokerage, relocation and settlement services. Sotheby’s International Realty Affiliates LLC and Sotheby’s International Realty Inc., both fully support the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.

Source: [click here](#)