The Upstream shift: Pivot or reveal?

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Just when you thought the Upstream shift might foster a new spirit of collaboration in the real estate industry, the guns were drawn again with National Association of Realtors (NAR) CEO Dale Stinton's combative rhetoric, as NAR approved an additional $9 million in funding for the scaled back version of Upstream at the Realtors legislative meetings in D.C.

Here the hosts of *Industry Relations*, Rob Hahn and Greg Robertson, talk about the fallout from the Upstream announcement and subsequent doubling down by Stinton at the board meeting that followed. As always, they each have a unique take on the motives of NAR and how Upstream's CEO might approach his role moving forward.

Listen in as they discuss the ambiguity around the project now that Upstream will allow brokers to enter their listings into their MLSs and how the change in tactics will affect particular industry players.

Click to learn how the antagonistic framing of the big announcement further divided the vendors and MLSs from the brokerages when it might have been an opportunity to mend fences.

What's discussed:

- The three-part Upstream bombshell (dropped at NAR's Midyear)
    - The so-called pivot
    - Blaming the vendors
    - 'Live demo' controversy
- Rob's theory regarding the motivation for Upstream
    - Planned syndication from the start
    - Working to regain control of lead generation
- NAR and Upstream's missed opportunity to generate a spirit of collaboration
- The purchase of ListHub as an alternative to Upstream
- How eliminating a single point of entry makes Upstream a simple listing syndication dashboard
- The industry skepticism around Upstream's transparency and NAR's motives
- Why Upstream is a top priority for brokerages
- How Upstream's messaging has evolved over time
    - Syndication
    - Multiple inputs

    - Blending data
    - Cyber terrorism
- Why Zillow is feared by brokerages, MLSs and associations
- Zillow's ability to provide a data management solution
- The inflammatory language used by the NAR CEO Dale Stinton (e.g., vendors and MLSs as 'cartel')
- The ambiguity of Upstream moving forward
    - Still building listing module?
    - Just another option?
- The Upstream pivot as a win for Zillow
- Why Zillow may have purchased Bridge Interactive
- How Upstream drove MLSs into the arms of Zillow
- The likelihood of a continued alliance between Zillow and MLSs to fight NAR
- How Upstream CEO Alex Lange might approach his role moving forward
- Post-pivot licensing issues for Upstream

Editor's note: Some statements in the podcast quoted from Inman Deputy Editor Andrea V. Brambila's reporting were said by Alex Lang rather than Dale Stinton. For more details, read the full article here.

Greg Robertson is a 25-year veteran in the industry, the co-founder of W+R Studios, publisher of the popular real estate technology/industry blog Vendor Alley and host of the podcasts Listing Bits and Industry Relations.

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