



Case Study - Online Transaction
Processing Comes of Age in
Florida

WAV GROUP

Marilyn A. Wilson
marilyn@wavgroup.com
<http://waves.wavgroup.com>
805 473-9119

Online Transaction Management comes of Age

Florida Online Transaction Processing Adoption – A Case Study

WAV Group has been tracking adoption of online transaction processing software for several years. In the 2005 WAV Group Transaction Management Adoption Survey, we learned about the factors that were inhibiting adoption of transaction management solutions. Since then, we have seen encouraging adoption increases around the country. As we predicted in 2005, adoption has increased first with forms and electronic faxing and is now moving aggressively to document management solutions.

This paper highlights a case study about adoption trends in the State of Florida. We are encouraged to see Florida REALTORS® embrace a suite of technologies that can help them become more efficient and provide more professional levels of service to their clients. The paper examines the adoption trends in Florida, among the pioneers in launching a statewide transaction management platform. The results are very encouraging for the future adoption of transaction management.

Online Transaction Processing – The Historical Perspective

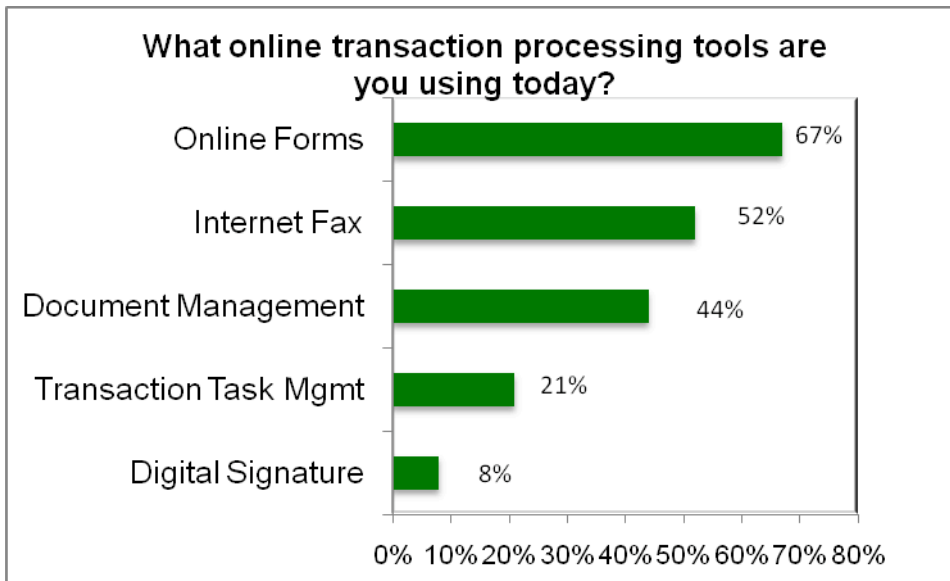
The real estate industry has been talking about completing transactions online and going paperless for a long time. Over the years there have been several technologies launched that helped agents create forms, store and distribute documents, order closing services and provide full transparency to real estate clients of the entire transaction process. Historically adoption was slower than expected because agents were not fundamentally displeased with their paper-rich process. In fact, in 2005 we learned that agents were so busy closing transactions, they were not that interested in learning how to process transactions more effectively. Many felt their paper processes were working fine for them.

Explosive Growth for Every Facet of Online Transaction Processing

Today, that has all changed. In the era of looking for ways to save time and money coupled with a growing concern about the environment, automated transaction processing methods have taken off. In WAV Group's soon to be published 2009 Transaction Management Adoption Study, usage of online forms, electronic faxing, and especially document management have increased significantly since 2005 across the United States.



Respondents in the study told us they first became familiar and comfortable with electronic forms and have now expanded usage to electronic faxing, document management and even online transaction task management. They have realized the benefits of initiating, creating, storing and distributing transaction information from one central online source. More than 2/3 of them are now using online forms and about ½ of them are now using Internet Faxing and Document Management.



Satisfaction Levels are high

Users of online transaction processing products are very pleased according to the 2009 WAV Group Transaction Management Adoption Study. 87% of users are either very or somewhat satisfied with their transaction management solution.

Here is a sample of the responses from survey respondents said:

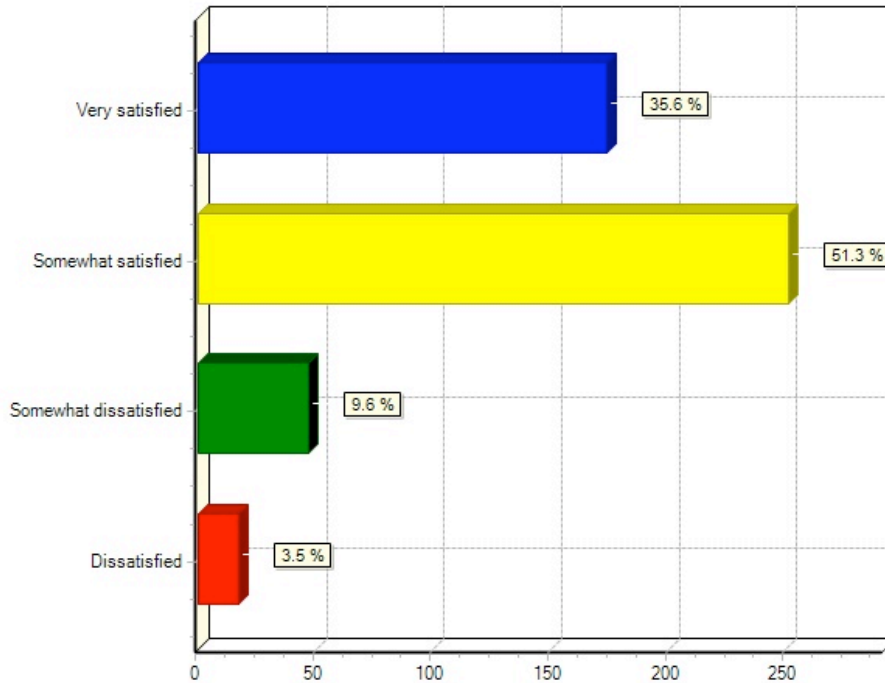
“It’s wonderful. Not only for forms, but to keep track of all my business from anywhere! Keeps me organized! Love it!”

“Saves time and paper, plus the output looks more professional than handwritten documents.”

“...Easy to sign in. Defines all docs required for transaction and their completion. Allows broker to leave notes on each transaction for easy clear communication without chasing phone calls.”

“It is easy to use and allows me to upload documents from home. It allows me to work on my timetable”.

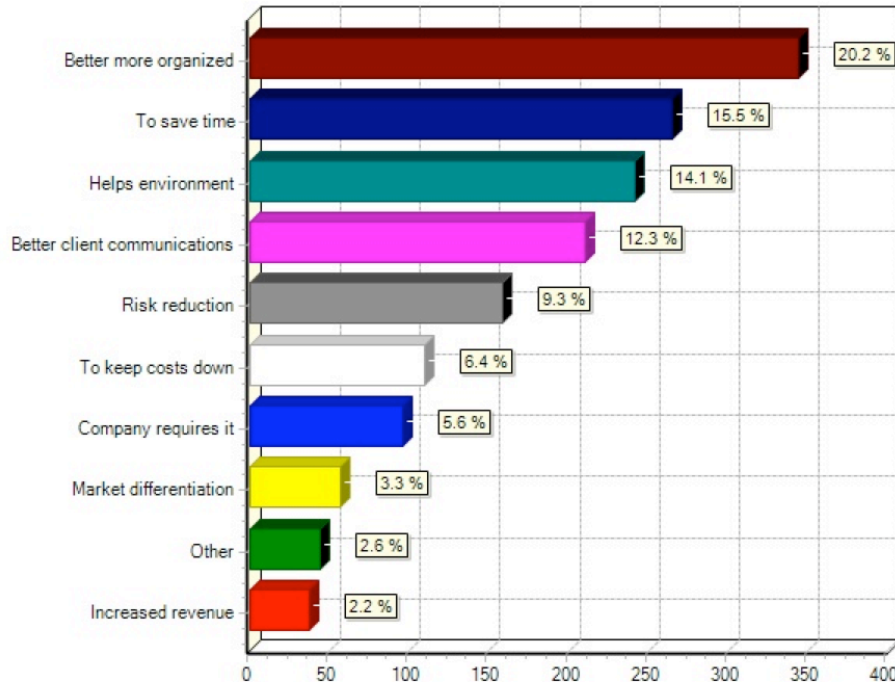
What is your overall satisfaction with your online Transaction Management system?



What are the advantages of online transaction processing?

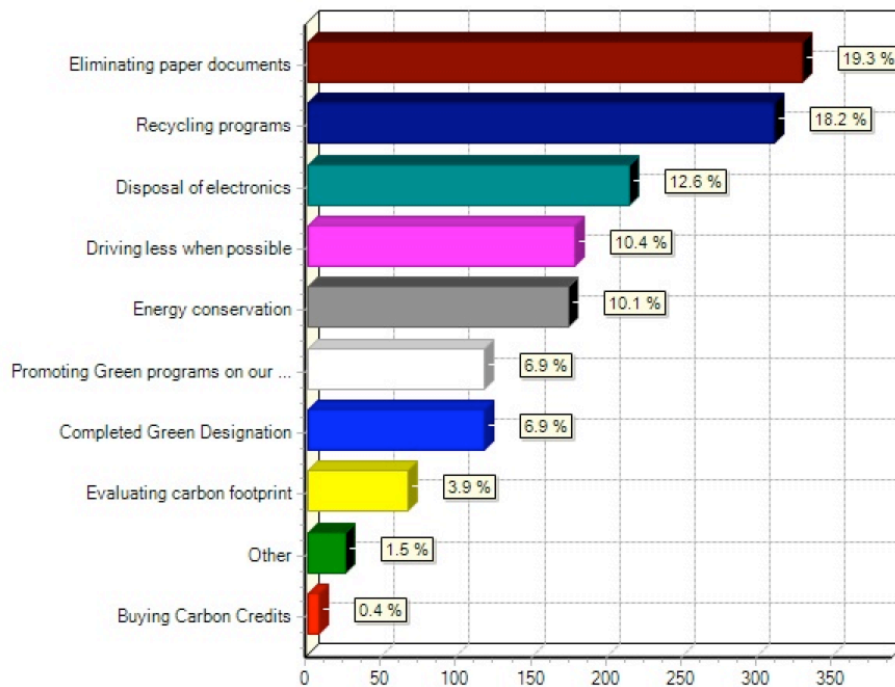
REALTORS® across America are now processing their transactions online for a variety of reasons. According to survey respondents of the soon to be released 2009 WAV Group Transaction Management Adoption Study, they are using online transaction processing to become more organized and save time while better serving the needs of their clients.





Going Green with online transaction processing

REALTORS®, like many Americans are going green. According to the soon to be released 2009 WAV Group Transaction Management Adoption Survey, agents were asked if they were going green in their business and if so how they were going green.



Respondents said they are eliminating paper as their primary method for reducing their environmental impact. If you would like to learn more about how to gain an edge by

going green you can download the Make More Green by Going Green white paper.
<http://waves.wavgroup.com/greenrealestateoperation>

REALTOR® organizations in Florida are no exception. They are promoting online transaction management to help their members not only save time, but save paper and reduce their environmental impact.

Rick Barkett, CEO, the REALTORS® Association of Greater Fort Lauderdale says:

“Due to the fact that our members have developed a strong confidence with the online tools that we offer, we have seen a dramatic increase in usage of Instanet TransactionDesk over the past two years. Our members are using this member benefit to go paperless and help the environment, while improving relationships with their clients by increasing transaction transparency. It’s a win/win situation.”

Florida – Ahead of the Curve

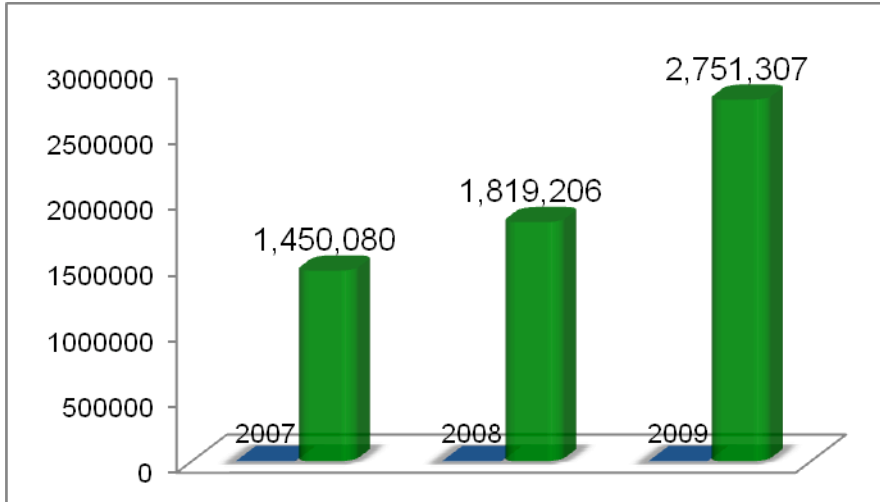
REALTORS® in Florida are not only adopting online transaction processing, they are ahead of the curve. Thanks to a member benefit offered by the Florida Association of REALTORS® through their REIS (Real Estate Industry Solutions) division and local Associations and MLSs, real estate professionals have had access to online forms, electronic faxing, document management, digital signatures and transaction task processing for several years. Florida was one of the first state associations in the country to recognize the value of a statewide transaction processing platform by partnering with Instanet Solutions to offer the TransactionDesk platform.

In 2009, 52% or nearly 60,000 Florida Association of REALTORS® members have logged into the transaction management system, an increase of 51.2% from last year. Few, if any technologies offered by associations other than MLS systems experience participation levels as high as this program.

System Logins – Nearly Double since 2007

In just two years since 2007, unique logins have nearly doubled totaling a projected 2.7 million log-ins for 2009. Florida REALTORS® have realized the power of processing transactions online and they are beginning to take full advantage of it now. This is particularly impressive given the decline in closed transactions in Florida during the same timeframe.

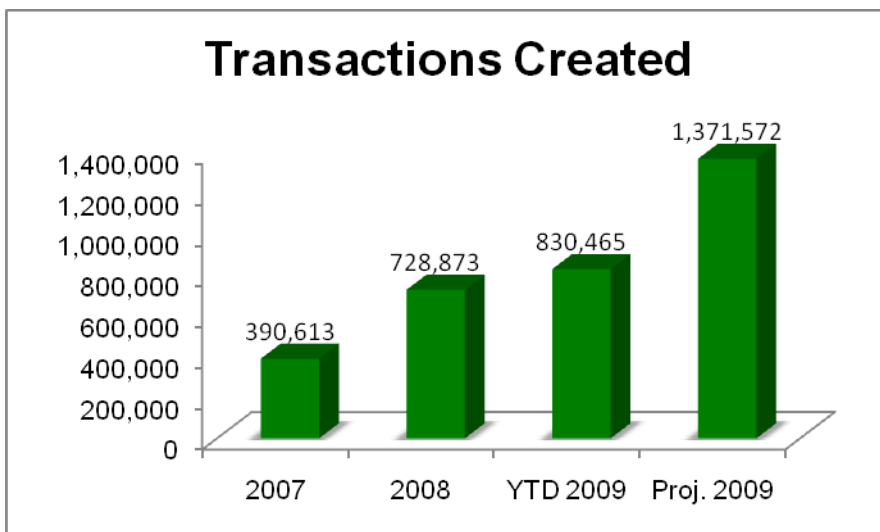




Bill Valdez, CEO of the South Broward Board of REALTORS®, is pleased with the results he has experienced in his association. He says:

“Our members have really begun to see the value of using TransactionDesk. Any member that has taken advantage of the free TransactionDesk webinars and training sessions readily sees and understands how easy TransactionDesk is to use. It is an incredible tool for both licensees and offices alike, and truly the final step to a paperless office. The usage in our area has skyrocketed.”

Transactions Initiated Online Now



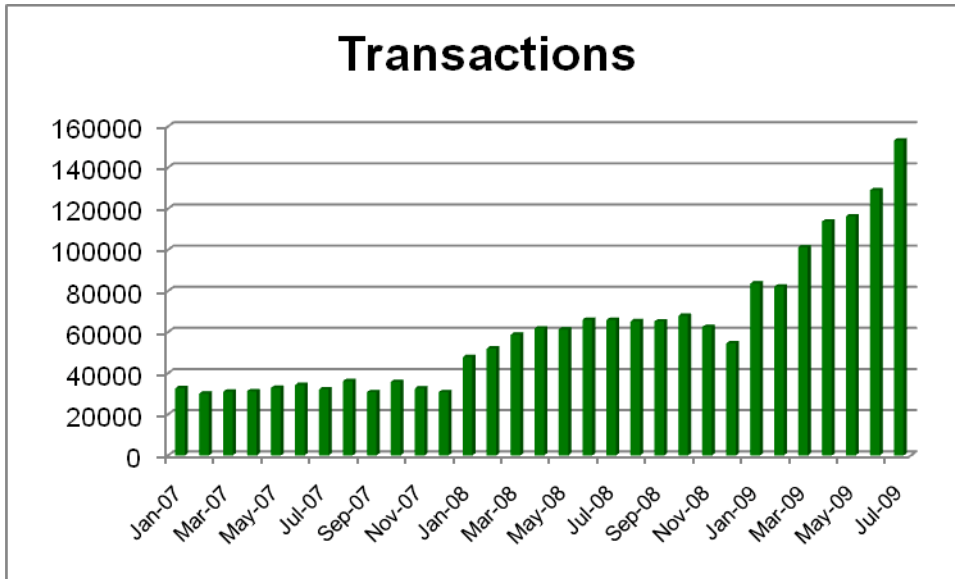
The number of transactions created in Florida through TransactionDesk software has more than tripled since 2007.

Year to date through July 2009, transactions created have surpassed all of the transactions created



throughout 2008. REALTORS® have figured out the power of these tools and are using them more comprehensively now.

To further illustrate the growth in usage, in 2007 fewer than 40,000 transactions per month were created within the TransactionDesk platform. In 2009 the average number of transactions created per month has nearly tripled to more than 100,000 per month.



Martha Bullman, CEO of the REALTOR® Association of Miami-Dade says:

“Our members have embraced online transaction processing. Going paperless and using the integrated fax to PDF and email functions, is allowing them to work more easily with their clients and customers and is revolutionary when working with the high volume of out of town real estate investors and home buyers who come to Florida.”

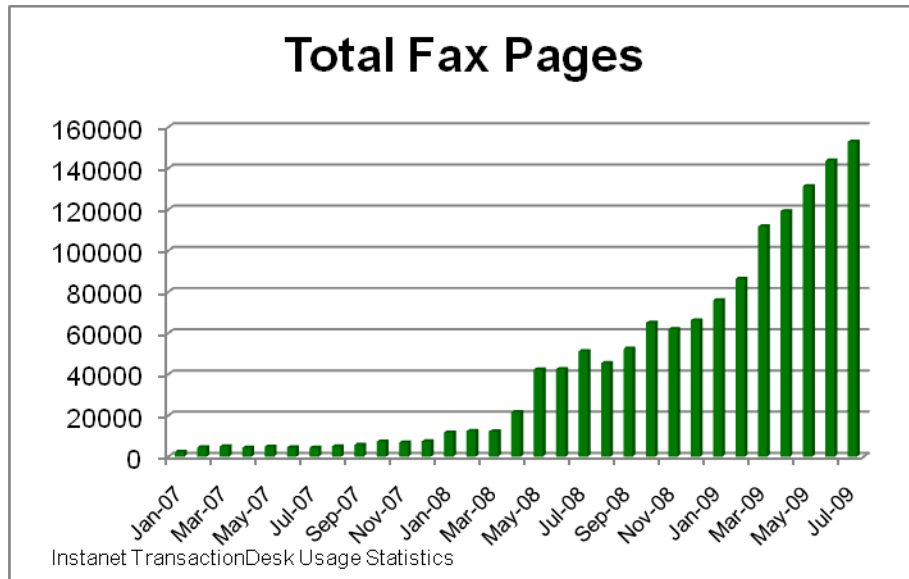
Explosive Growth in Electronic Faxing – Forms and Documents

According to the soon to be published WAV Group 2009 Transaction Management Adoption Survey, 96.6% of electronic fax users are either somewhat or very satisfied.



These high satisfaction levels have been reflected in adoption in Florida. While usage was fairly limited in 2007, it began to ramp up in early 2008 and has really accelerated in 2009. In the past twelve months, monthly Electronic Fax usage has tripled. Florida REALTORS®

are now recognizing the value of this free member benefit offered by the state and local associations. If a REALTOR® in Florida purchases electronic faxing on their own, the cost is anywhere from \$17 to \$20 per month. This



member benefit can save a REALTOR® more than \$200 per year.

Ann Guiberson, CEO of Pinellas REALTOR® Organization says:

"Our members are very satisfied with our Instanet fax services. We switched from a competitor because their service was not integrated with the rest of the TransactionDesk suite and our members have provided us very good feedback about the switch. It has helped them to not only use electronic faxing more, but the entire suite of forms, document management and transaction management offerings. "

How Florida MLS providers are encouraging adoption

In 2005 few MLSs had integrated their transaction management solution into their MLS system. Without auto-population of listing information, satisfaction levels were much lower because agents felt like creating a transaction online did not save them any time. Many MLSs and transaction management vendors recognized this challenge and have now created the ability to auto-populate information directly into a transaction management platform from a listing or tax record.

Many MLS providers in Florida, for example, are now integrating TransactionDesk directly into their MLS system and tax/property records system. By integrating online transaction processing directly into the MLS system via a single sign on solution, it is much more convenient for agents to initiate the creation of their forms by setting up a transaction folder. By encouraging adoption through training and single sign on



initiatives, the percentage of forms being initiated within a transaction folder has increased dramatically.

In July 2009, 55% of all forms created in Florida through the Instanet solution are being initiated within a transaction folder. Just two years ago only 20% of forms were being written within a transaction folder. This trend is yet another indicator agents are getting more comfortable creating and managing their transactions online.

MyFloridaRegionaMLS(MFRMLS) in Orlando, for example, recently integrated TransactionDesk into their MLXchange system and iMapp Tax/Property Records solutions. While MFRMLS already had approximately 50% of their agents using the TransactionDesk regularly, they wanted to make it easier for their members to use the system to their full advantage. Agents can now initiate a transaction directly from their listings within the MLS system. They can also create a pre-listing by populating information from the tax and property records. In less than 2 months since the integration, more than 35% of agents using Transaction management software are now accessing their transaction processing software directly through this MLS system.

Now that TransactionDesk is auto-populating with data from the MLS, usage has also increased dramatically. Average number of unique log-ins has increased 30% in just one month from 36,151 to 46,474 from June to July, 2009. Nearly 2/3 of all forms created were begun within a transaction folder, representing a 63% increase in use in one month. The step to integrate the ability to set up a transaction from a list or tax record has also played a role in significantly increasing adoption rates.

Merri Jo Cowen, CEO of MyFloridaRegionaMLS says:

“We recognized the need to help our members access TransactionDesk more easily so we they could auto populate information from our MLXChange MLS system as well as our iMapp solution. We are always searching for ways to help our agents become more efficient and leverage technology to their advantage and the single sign on integration with TransactionDesk has helped us achieve this goal.”

How Florida REALTORS® are taking full advantage of Online Transaction Processing

Florida REALTORS® have demonstrated many ways to take full advantage of the efficiencies to be realized by using online transaction processing products. They have continued to adopt more components of online transaction processing over time. Those that started first by using electronic forms are now setting them up in a transaction folder so they can easily reference the forms by transaction.

Once a form that has been set-up in a transaction has been signed, Florida REALTORS® are now able to store, distribute and easily retrieve these documents online, without having to page through boxes of paper files. They are also able to easily share the electronic documents with fellow REALTORS®, clients and service providers.



Satisfaction levels are among the highest with electronic faxing. They have learned that electronic faxing is easy to use and helps simplify the process of creating and executing documents. Now agents don't have to deal with unreadable documents that were faxed via traditional means. They have learned how easy it is to set up your own personalized cover page and automatically load documents into transaction folders.

Most importantly they have learned they can save money by using the Florida-provided electronic fax product. By taking advantage of this great member benefit from their state and local association, agents are saving as much as \$240 per year.

How Florida is continuing to drive adoption

Despite the progress that has been made by many real estate professionals there are still some that have not tried online transaction processing. Some believe it may be too difficult to use or be too cumbersome to learn. Those that have still not tried the system are now being invited to attend an introductory webinar to learn more about the advantages of online transaction processing. The webinars show the key benefits of online transaction processing and demonstrate easy it is to use and will actually save agents time and money, while presenting a more professional image to clients.

Learn More - Free Training for Brokerages, MLSs and Associations

If you are an agent, broker or MLS/Association from Florida and would like to learn more about how to take full advantage of the power of online transaction processing they can contact the training department for TransactionDesk at transactiondesk.com/training. Classes are free and can be customized to the needs of an individual office, MLS or association. If you are not in Florida you can contact your local transaction management provider to attend a session as well.



About the Authors

WAV Group is a leader in providing technology consulting services and research to the real estate industry. The company provides strategic direction and thought leadership to some of the industry's leading Multiple Listing Services, Associations, Technology companies and real estate organizations globally. WAV Group regularly publishes studies and white papers on a variety of technology topics.

WAV Group has expertise in the areas of content development, market research, strategic planning, product development, distribution, marketing, and technology evaluation, selection and implementation.

For more information, contact WAV Group at info@wavgroup.com. If you would like to receive a copy of the upcoming 2009 WAV Group Transaction Management Adoption Study you can register to receive regular blog updates at <http://waves.wavgroup.com> and insert your email address in the subscribe area on the left hand side of the page.

A Word of Thanks

WAV Group would like to thank [Instanet Solutions](#) for providing valuable usage information for their TransactionDesk solution. WAV Group would also like to thank Bill Valdez of the South Broward Board of REALTORS®, Martha Bullman of the REALTOR® Association of Miami-Dade, Rick Barkett of the REALTOR® Association of Greater Fort Lauderdale, Ann Guiberson of Pinellas REALTOR® Organization and Merri Jo Cowen of My Florida Regional MLS for their input and feedback about the status of transaction management in Florida.

A Request for Future Case Studies

WAV Group would like to continue to prepare case studies to document the state of adoption and satisfaction with online transaction processing. If you have a case study on the subject you would like us to consider please contact us at marilyn@wavgroup.com.



