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Jim Kasparian - Integrate professionalism into everyday appraisal activity can benefit the entire industry

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I was recently researching some valuation issues on various appraisal forums and noticed something interesting. Wow was there a lot of loud criticism of almost every aspect of our profession. It started with Appraisal Management Company (AMC) issues, went to Dodd-Frank, lingered into diminished fee structures, and wandered around eventually focusing on typical "client ignorance." Many of these areas have affected the climate of appraising during my career, not all necessarily in a negative way.

What if you actually acted on some of the suggestions posted in the online forums by the most disgruntled appraiser, or worse, former appraiser, looking to carry on his or her negative agenda towards everything associated with the industry? I think you would be looking into a quick career change.

With an astonishing number of appraisers leaving the industry, together with a smaller stock of trainees entering the business, the appraiser pool is rapidly diminishing. We must focus on a clear path in order to endure the economic hardships. A few ideas might be:

- * staying current with new technologies and recent legislative changes;
- * getting involved in peer dialog and professional associations;
- * actively mentoring new trainees, and
- * pursuing new appraisal revenue avenues.

The way in which we integrate professionalism into our everyday appraisal activity can benefit the entire industry. I know how easy it is to take a defensive posture with a phone call from a client or reviewer questioning my work. Whether it be about a methodology, comparable sale, capitalization rate, or something much simpler, the tone we take in conversation has a direct impact on our business relationships. Every discussion we have with a client offers a chance to further the professionalism of our industry as well as strengthening the client relationship and providing the potential to generate new business. We need to consider these review discussions as positive opportunities rather than a reason to get defensive about our work product.

Another question to ask is how we incorporate professionalism with everyday contacts. Will some property owners vehemently disagree with our value conclusions? Yes! There is no outrunning this. If you are true to the profession this will eventually happen. We don't go out intending to kill any deal, or put bias towards a property. We do our best to give our "opinion" of value. If questions arise, warranted or not, handle it professionally. We all know that it is difficult to be the bearer of bad news with regard to a value conclusion, but the industry as a whole benefits when you relay your findings with the appropriate degree of professionalism and provide adequate support for your conclusions.

The "appraisal" is continuing to evolve and I personally do not think is going away. This statement might draw criticism. I know it did 15 years ago when we were talking about it. Regulations are going to change for the good or bad. If we as a group conduct ourselves professionally we will be able to support or change whatever we put our minds to.

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