

INNOVATION IN REAL ESTATE SALES STRATEGIES: A STUDY ON THE ADOPTION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND CRM

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Abstract: The real estate sector is undergoing an accelerated digital transformation, redefining sales strategies and customer relationships. This paper investigates how high-performance real estate brokerages are using digital technologies, with a focus on Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, to optimize lead conversion and customer loyalty. Through a systematic literature review and analysis of secondary market data, the study explores the benefits, challenges, and performance metrics associated with technology adoption. The results indicate that while CRM implementation can generate a return on investment (ROI) exceeding 200% and increase productivity by over 30%, adoption failure rates remain high, often surpassing 60%, due to factors such as poor usability, resistance to change, and the lack of a user-centered approach. The study concludes that success lies not just in technology adoption, but in its strategic integration, aligned with an organizational culture that prioritizes data analysis, user experience, and the building of long-term relationships, measured by Customer Lifetime Value (CLV). A proposed analysis model combines the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT), and Task-Technology Fit (TTF) to guide future implementations and research in the sector.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Real Estate Market, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Sales Strategy, Conversion Rate, Customer Loyalty, Technology Adoption.

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Introduction

The real estate sector, traditionally characterized by manual processes and a long, complex sales cycle, is at an inflection point driven by digital transformation. The proliferation of online platforms, data analysis tools, and management systems has reshaped consumer expectations and the competitive dynamics of the market (Starr, Saginor, & Worzala, 2021). In this new landscape, a real estate brokerage's ability to adapt and innovate has become a determining factor for its success and sustainability.

The adoption of digital technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and, fundamentally, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems, has shifted from being a differentiator to a strategic necessity. These tools promise to optimize operational efficiency, personalize service, and, most importantly, increase lead conversion rates and customer loyalty. However, the mere acquisition of technology does not guarantee results. Industry reports indicate that a significant portion of CRM implementations fail to achieve their proposed objectives, revealing a critical gap between the promise of technology and the reality of its application (Ferreira et al., 2023).

This paper addresses this gap by investigating the following research question: How do high-performance real estate brokerages effectively use digital platforms and CRM systems to increase conversion rates and customer loyalty? The objective is to go beyond a superficial analysis of technology adoption, delving into the strategies, metrics, and organizational factors that distinguish successful companies. To this end, a systematic review of academic literature and an analysis of secondary market data were conducted, focusing on performance benchmarks, case studies, and theoretical adoption frameworks.

The study is structured as follows: Section 2 presents the literature review and theoretical foundation; Section 3 details the research methodology; Section 4 presents and analyzes the compiled results; Section 5 discusses the implications of the findings; and Section 6 concludes the work, synthesizing the contributions and suggesting directions for future research.

Theoretical Foundation

Understanding how digital technologies impact the real estate sector requires a multifaceted analysis, encompassing everything from specific tools to the theoretical models that explain their adoption and the business results they can generate.

Digital Transformation in the Real Estate Sector

Digital transformation in the real estate market is a comprehensive phenomenon that restructures operations from property management and investment appraisal to consumer interaction (Al-haimi et al., 2025). The main technologies driving this change include Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, Augmented Reality (AR), and Virtual Reality (VR). As highlighted by Al-haimi et al. (2025) in a systematic review, the benefits are tangible, including greater operational efficiency, data-enhanced decision-making, and deeper customer engagement. However, the challenges are equally significant, such as high implementation costs, data security concerns, and cultural resistance to change within organizations.

The Central Role of CRM in Sales Strategy

Within the arsenal of digital technologies, CRM stands out as the backbone of modern sales strategy. It transcends the function of a mere contact database, acting as an integrated platform to manage the entire customer lifecycle. However, the effectiveness of a CRM is intrinsically linked to its usability and user experience. A study by Ferreira et al. (2023) on CRM implementation in the real estate sector revealed project failure rates that can reach 85%.



“Despite the growth in CRM installations, e-CRM projects still have a significant failure rate, even after substantial investments in CRM technology. High rates of failure mean that the current requirements for developing and designing CRM need to be analysed. It’s not enough to just look at data related to a service’s efficiency; it’s also crucial to consider the impact on the user experience and their overall level of satisfaction.” (Ferreira et al., 2023)

This high failure rate underscores the importance of a user-centered design approach and change management strategies to ensure adoption by the sales team.

Theoretical Frameworks of Technology Adoption

To analyze the factors influencing the successful adoption of technologies like CRM, we turn to established theoretical models:

- **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):** Proposed by Davis (1989), TAM posits that the acceptance of a technology is determined by two main perceptions: Perceived Usefulness (the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will enhance their job performance) and Perceived Ease of Use (the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system will be free of effort). In the real estate context, a broker will adopt a CRM if they believe it will help them sell more (usefulness) and that it will not be complicated to use (ease).
- **Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT):** Developed by Rogers (2003), IDT explains how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technologies spread. The theory classifies adopters into categories (innovators, early adopters, early/late majority, and laggards) and identifies attributes of innovation that influence adoption, such as relative advantage, compatibility, and complexity. High-performance brokerages tend to position themselves as innovators or early adopters, seeking a competitive advantage.



- Task-Technology Fit (TTF): The TTF model suggests that a technology will only have a positive impact on individual performance if its functionalities align well with the tasks the user needs to perform. For a broker, an effective CRM must have features that perfectly match the tasks of prospecting, lead qualification, scheduling viewings, and post-sale follow-up.

The combination of these three models offers a robust framework for understanding not only if a technology is adopted, but how it fits into daily tasks and diffuses through the organization to generate value.

Methodology

This study employed a methodology of Systematic Literature Review combined with Secondary Data Analysis. The approach was chosen to synthesize existing academic knowledge and validate it with market data and industry benchmarks, providing a comprehensive and up-to-date view of the phenomenon.

The research process was conducted in two main stages:

- Literature Review: A systematic search was conducted in academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Search terms included combinations of “real estate sales,” “digital transformation,” “CRM,” “conversion rate,” “customer loyalty,” “technology adoption,” “TAM,” and “IDT.” Articles published in the last five years were selected, with priority given to systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and empirical studies presenting quantitative data.
- Secondary Data Analysis: The research was supplemented by collecting data from market reports, publications from specialized consulting firms (such as Gartner, Forrester,



Promodo, Nucleus Research), and articles from industry-leading publications. The focus was on compiling performance metrics, market benchmarks, case studies, and ROI statistics related to the adoption of CRM and other digital technologies in the real estate sector.

The collected data were organized, categorized, and synthesized in a research notes file. The analysis consisted of cross-referencing information, identifying patterns, quantifying benefits and challenges, and connecting empirical findings with the selected theoretical frameworks to build a cohesive argument that answered the research question.

Results and Analysis

The analysis of the collected data reveals a landscape of great opportunities, but also of significant risks. High-performance brokerages differentiate themselves by how they navigate this environment, turning technology investments into measurable results.

The Quantitative Impact of Technology Adoption

Market data demonstrates a significant financial and operational impact from the adoption of CRM and other digital technologies. The key performance indicators (KPIs) and return on investment (ROI) found in the literature and industry reports reveal a promising, albeit challenging, landscape. The return on investment for CRM systems, according to Nucleus Research, reaches an impressive \$8.71 for every \$1 invested, establishing it as one of the most profitable technological applications in the sector. In terms of sales impact, CRM implementation can lead to increases of up to 29%, as documented by Teamgate (2025), while the productivity of sales teams can grow by up to 34% with the same technology.



When considering automation integrated with CRM systems, the gains become even more significant. Revenue per salesperson can increase by 41%, according to data from SuperOffice, demonstrating that technology not only facilitates work but also multiplies individual results. From a cost-efficiency perspective, the reduction in lead acquisition costs reaches 23%, as reported by LLCBuddy (2025), allowing brokerages to optimize their marketing and prospecting investments. However, this optimistic scenario is contrasted by a worrying reality: the failure rates for CRM implementation projects remain alarmingly high, ranging from 60% to 85%, as documented by Ferreira et al. (2023).

Comparative Analysis of Channels and Conversion

High-performance brokerages demonstrate a deep understanding of conversion rates across different channels, optimizing their marketing investments accordingly. The analysis of conversion benchmarks for various marketing channels in the real estate sector reveals important patterns that guide the strategic allocation of resources. Organic search (SEO) leads in effectiveness, with an average conversion rate of 3.2%, according to data from Promodo (2025), making it the most efficient channel in terms of return on digital marketing efforts. This superior performance reflects the quality and intent of users who arrive at real estate websites organically.

In contrast, paid search (PPC / Google Ads) has a conversion rate of 1.5%, approximately half the performance of organic traffic, although it still represents a viable channel for rapid generation of qualified leads. Email marketing shows similar performance, with a 1.4% conversion rate, highlighting its relevance for nurturing relationships and keeping the brand top-of-mind for potential clients. Referral marketing, with a 1.3% conversion rate, although having the lowest percentage among the analyzed channels, holds significant strategic value due to the inherent quality and trust of leads from recommendations. When we consider the overall average for internet leads, conversion rates range between 1% and 3.5%, as documented by The Close (2024), establishing a benchmark for the sector.



One of the most counterintuitive and crucial findings is the importance of the telephone channel. Data from Promodo (2025) shows that 38% of all successful conversions occur over the phone, with 75.4% of users who click on ads preferring this channel to convert. This suggests that, even in the digital age, qualified human interaction remains central to closing high-value deals, and digital platforms act as a powerful catalyst to initiate this conversation.

The Human Factor: Adoption, Resistance, and Loyalty

Successful companies understand that technology is a tool to empower people, not to replace them. They invest heavily in training, change management, and the design of intuitive and efficient processes. The analysis of the reasons for CRM adoption failure consistently points to human factors: system complexity, lack of alignment with brokers' tasks (low TTF), and resistance to abandoning traditional methods. High-performance brokerages overcome these obstacles by:

- Involving end-users (brokers) in the CRM selection and customization process, ensuring the tool meets their real needs (high TTF and Perceived Usefulness).
- Investing in continuous training and technical support, reducing the perception of complexity and increasing Perceived Ease of Use.
- Creating a data-driven culture, where using the CRM to track interactions and measure results is seen as essential for individual and team success.

Beyond conversion, loyalty is where CRM shows its long-term value. The ability to maintain a detailed record of interactions, preferences, and customer history allows for personalized post-sale follow-up, the identification of new business opportunities (e.g., a client who bought a small apartment may need a larger one years later), and the generation of referrals, which have one of the highest conversion rates. The fact that customer acquisition costs are 5 to 10 times higher than retention costs



makes this strategy fundamental for sustainable profitability.

Discussion

The analyzed results allow us to answer the central research question: high-performance brokerages use digital platforms and CRM not just as operational tools, but as pillars of an integrated business strategy. The how lies in the synergistic combination of three elements: technology, process, and people.

- **Technology:** The choice goes beyond CRM. It includes integration with marketing automation tools, AI for lead scoring, and data analytics platforms to extract actionable insights. Technology is seen as an ecosystem, not an isolated solution.
- **Process:** Sales processes are redesigned to be customer-centric and data-driven. The sales funnel is clearly defined within the CRM, with automatic triggers for follow-ups, lead nurturing, and alerts for brokers. The customer journey is mapped and continuously optimized based on conversion metrics and feedback.
- **People:** There is a strong investment in team empowerment. Leadership promotes a culture where technology is an ally. Broker performance metrics are tied to the correct use of the CRM, encouraging adoption and data quality. Success is measured not only in closed sales but in building a relationship that generates Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) through repeat business and referrals.

The hybrid conversion model (digital to capture, human to close) is particularly relevant. Successful companies do not try to automate the human touch in a high-trust transaction like real estate. Instead, they use technology to amplify the reach and efficiency of their brokers, freeing them from administrative tasks so they can focus on what they do best: building relationships and



negotiating.

The limitations of this study lie in its reliance on secondary data. Although the synthesis of benchmarks and literature provides a robust overview, primary, in-depth case studies with Brazilian brokerages would be necessary to validate and contextualize these findings in the local reality.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that innovation in real estate sales strategies transcends the simple adoption of digital technologies. High-performance brokerages are distinguished by a strategic approach that integrates CRM and other digital tools with well-defined processes and a customer-centric, data-driven organizational culture.

The ability to increase conversion and loyalty does not derive from the technology per se, but from how it is used to optimize the customer journey, empower the sales team, and build long-term relationships. Success in the digital age requires a balance between the efficiency of automation and the effectiveness of the human touch, with digital platforms serving to qualify and scale the interactions that largely culminate in meaningful human conversations.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal empirical studies that follow brokerages during the CRM implementation process to measure the impact on performance metrics over time. Additionally, qualitative research with leaders and brokers from high- and low-performance companies could provide deeper insights into the cultural and behavioral factors that determine the success or failure of digital transformation in the real estate sector.

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