



Garden State Multiple Listing Service LLC

Automating fax communications to save time and facilitate information sharing



Garden State Multiple Listing Service LLC (GSMLS) is a privately held, not-for-profit organization that runs a search engine for New Jersey licensed real-estate agents seeking information about property available for sale or rent in northern New Jersey. The online listing service currently advertises more than 32,700 properties, including images for nearly every single listing available through the service. GSMLS provides its member group, which consists of 22,000 licensed real estate agents, the ability to share information amongst themselves regarding available property. Bob Kimpland is GSMLS' Director of IT. His staff includes four other technical support staff as well as four computer programmers. GSMLS runs a mix of Microsoft and Linux hardware, and leverages Oracle software for databases. The infrastructure for the listing database is maintained by a custom application developed in-house.

Challenge

GSMLS is among many companies providing searchable databases with information about property in northern New Jersey. Bob noticed that GSMLS lacked a means that enabled their users to easily share additional documents, such as disclosure statements, amongst themselves.

"While we do provide a wealth of information about listings for our members, we noticed that our members were not able to share some information as easily as they could working with some competitor sites," said Kimpland. "During the course of helping buyers find properties, it is common for real-estate agents to share certain documents pertaining to the properties offered for sale. With the system we had in place, we couldn't accommodate the sharing of the additional information that really only applied to potential buyers."

GSMLS members enter property information online, making knowledge of property for rent or sale immediately available to all other members. The challenge arose when a selling real-estate agent needed to contact a listing real-estate agent to and request additional documents, such as surveys, floor plans, disclosure documents, compliance documents or zoning requirements. These documents are typically only needed once a potential buyer has expressed interest in a property. Prior to implementation, communication between the real-estate agents was done via phone calls and faxes. This would occur multiple times for each listing. So, due to the large number of property listings, the large network of real-estate agents and the increasing interest in requests for property information, sharing documents in a timely manner was very difficult.

Solution: Esker DeliveryWare

Kimpland knew GSMLS could make a change that would improve how information was being shared. Keeping in mind his current customers were familiar with the faxing process, he did an Internet search for automatic fax document servers and came across Esker.

"We asked Esker to come in and give us a presentation of DeliveryWare. It was by far the best we had seen. Everything was answered for us. It was a smooth process with which we were very pleased because some other vendors that came to see us didn't do as well," said Kimpland. "Esker also demonstrated how the software could grow in functionality as we grow our business in the future. That was important to us."

The initial installation of Esker DeliveryWare only took two hours to complete. "We had very simple requirements up front. We implemented Esker DeliveryWare to eliminate the need for selling real estate agents to have to contact listing real estate agents and request documents. Instead, now a listing agent can make the most common documents available to all members immediately. This saves our members time that was once spent on phone calls and faxes that were common when a buyer was interested in a property," said Kimpland. "The software integrated into our system with no trouble and we haven't touched it (for administration) since."

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Bob Kimpland ■ Director of IT ■ GSMLS



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With Esker DeliveryWare, when information about a piece of property is sent via fax to GSMLS, it is converted into a PDF and then automatically routed to be published with the appropriate property listing. Esker DeliveryWare has the ability to interpret and process the bar code information on the cover page of the incoming document. As that information of interest to all potential buyers is easily available to every member, there is no need for listing real-estate agents to be sending faxes to selling real-estate agents. The only time documents must still be faxed back and forth between agents is when it contains confidential information about an offer to purchase a property. This must only be known to the individual buyer and seller of a particular property.

“We have 30,000 active listings on our website and the amount continues to increase each day,” said Kimpland. “The fact that real-estate agents do not have to fax back and forth in order for people to see the necessary information quickly is tremendous. With Esker DeliveryWare we have facilitated the sharing process and saved our customers a significant amount of time and resources. It has worked out far better than we expected. Although it looked great from the beginning we were cautious, but Esker has definitely come through for our business.”

Benefits/Future Plans

Moving forward, GSMLS wants to automate more of its operations.

“One of our long-term goals is to switch to a form-based approach for the company. Automating more faxes and even postal mail would make a huge impact and allow us to keep costs very low,” said Kimpland. “I am confident when we are ready to do that, Esker will get us there.”

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