

What Brokers Want From Technology Companies

Technology demand signals drawn
from more than 140 brokerage
conversations



T3 Sixty Research



T3 SIXTY RESEARCH

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T3 SIXTY RESEARCH

About this report

Technology companies rarely hear brokers describe their problems without a product in the room. T3 Sixty does. Over a three-month period in mid-2026, T3 Sixty advisors engaged in more than 50 conversations with brokerage owners, operators and executives across independents, franchise affiliates, master franchise networks, portfolio holding companies and mega teams. This report spells out what those brokers said they need, in their own words, with no brokerage or individual named.

For additional details on how this material was gathered and how it is presented, please see the appendix.

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Executive summary

Brokers are not asking the technology industry for more capability. They are asking for fewer systems, cleaner data out of the systems they already own and evidence that anyone in their company will actually use what they buy.

Nine findings recur across firms that share no vendor, no market and no business model.

- 1 Consolidation beats capability. Integration was the most frequently named answer to "fix one thing about your technology." No broker in the sample asked for another point solution, meaning a tool with a tight focus and little or no connection to other tools.
- 2 Very few solutions are architected for the buyer with money. Teams, franchise networks and multi-entity operators repeatedly described products built for a single brokerage with a single legal entity and a single administrator.
- 3 Measurement is the most broken function in the brokerage, at every size. Per-agent profitability, churn attribution and pipeline forecasting are missing from firms running between nine and 1,500 agents.
- 4 Compliance and transaction review is the consensus first AI use case, and adoption in this sample is close to zero. Demand is universal. Purchase is not.
- 5 The system of record will not release its data cleanly or at a predictable price. Three firms described the same problem in three different ways: re-keying between systems, opaque pass-through API costs and extraction limits on legacy versions.
- 6 A consistent challenge is the pricing model, not the price. Per-seat pricing, contact-count caps, team-tier penalties and unpredictable token cost drew more criticism than absolute dollars.
- 7 Adoption is the product. Brokers now underwrite against adoption risk, and they have the scar tissue to justify it.
- 8 Vendors lose customers at migration, not at renewal. Two franchise networks with no relationship to each other said, unprompted, that their platform vendor focuses on new prospects and leaves migrating customers to work things out on their own.
- 9 Franchisor and platform roadmap silence is freezing third-party purchasing. Several affiliates have stopped buying while they wait to learn what their franchisor will provide.

A tenth finding sits underneath the rest, but is worth calling out: Brokers are building. Five firms in this sample are building or have built core platform components themselves, and three more have replaced commercial products with in-house work assembled using general-purpose AI tools. In every case the trigger was the broker's need for better measurement and improved workflow, not a desire to build technology. That is a symptom of unmet demand, and it is also a competitive threat with a short shelf life — several of those same operators say plainly that they would rather have bought.

FINDING

1



Consolidation beats capability

Asked what single thing they would fix, brokers and team leaders in this sample answered "connect it" far more often than they named a missing feature. Brokers described the tools as adequate on their own. The problem is that there are too many of them, they do not speak to each other and the seams are stitched together by staff.

"The connectivity of everything. It's just so many logins, so many different silos. Being able to connect it and have it more streamlined and be more leveraged to our assistance than problematic. It's just really, right now our tech is a hindrance to our business."

— Owner, 80-agent Florida independent, 750 sides per year and \$450 million in annual sales volume

"We don't want agents on two or three or four or five platforms, which was kind of what was happening. So many apps, so many names."

— Owner, Tennessee mega team, 130-plus agents

"Having one system would be amazing instead of having GoHighLevel, Brivity, Command, Mailchimp for the newsletter. You know, instead of logging into all these different platforms."

— Team owner, Arizona franchise affiliate, \$80 million in annual sales volume

The same preference appeared from the opposite direction. A well-established Florida independent with title, mortgage and insurance in-house described its target state as "one interface, one journey" for both staff and agents. A North Carolina mega team closing more than 700 sides per year asked T3 Sixty to "recommend a company that looks at everything together." A nine-agent Texas team leader described refusing integrations on purpose because "it's just too easy to get lost in all of those," and praised her primary platform for a reason that had nothing to do with features:

"I have one dashboard to log into. And right now, because I run such a slim, slim admin team, that's been really beneficial for me."

— Team leader, nine-agent Texas team



“Because I talk to a lot of brokers, they all hate their tech. They all hate it, it doesn’t matter. So there’s a big market.”

— Owner, 50-agent Florida independent that built its own platform

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- The all-in-one claim is now audited. One owner tested four consolidation platforms and concluded: "They're all a mess. Nothing is connected anywhere like they think it is." Claiming integration and shipping a Zapier recipe is a reputational liability.
- Open, documented APIs are a purchase criterion. One team owner named a closed platform as unusable specifically because "you can't put those APIs in there."
- Point solutions still sell into a live pain, but the buyer now discounts them. A Canadian franchise affiliate shopping an AI contract-review tool accepted the framing that it "doesn't necessarily solve things holistically" while continuing to evaluate it. Point solutions win the deal and lose the platform position.
- Every additional login is a staffing cost. As one vendor executive in the sample put it, brokerages "have to staff around all these different point solutions."

FINDING

2



Very few solutions are architected for the buyer with money

The firms in this sample with budget are rarely a single brokerage with a single legal entity. They are teams, franchise networks, merged operations and holding companies with several businesses. Product architecture has not caught up, and the mismatch was named independently by five firms that share no vendor.

“Companies think they’re ready for an enterprise-level company, but they’re not. One company like eXp, who is one brokerage with a bunch of agents, is significantly different than a franchise with 55 different franchise owners. And I think these technology companies missed a boat on that and they think they’re prepared for it until they have to do it and then they’re a little lost.”

— Executive, 55-office U.S. franchisor

“They’re not built for volume. They’re not built for teams. That’s a bigger problem that we have just globally with all tech.”

— Owner, 80-agent Florida independent

The multi-entity case is sharper still. A Southern California independent runs brokerage, property management, a licensed construction company, syndication and advisory with a nine-person accounting team. It rejected a brokerage back-office recommendation twice, to two different advisors, on the same grounds:

“I’m not in love with the idea of running all of our businesses out of a system I’ve never heard of. I think I would also limit our accounting options as well. Only commissions on a separate system, only commission.”

— CEO, Southern California multi-line independent

A Canadian master franchise network reported a merged brokerage that operates as one business but remains two legal entities, producing “an artificial wall in the tech that separates the two that they don’t want.” A U.S. franchise affiliate operating in two states across three corporations described organization-level reporting as requiring “a mad scientist spreadsheet exporter.” A portfolio holding company with independently operated brokerages needs one query surface across tenants and cannot get one.



“We have a partnership with [the back office vendor] through [the franchise] but we don’t use it. It’s not good for a team. There’s no master control panel. You have to go into each individual account.”

— Team owner, Arizona franchise affiliate

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- Multi-tenancy, multi-entity permissioning and per-brand configuration are first-class requirements in the segment that can pay, not enterprise-tier afterthoughts.
- A commissions module that does not force a general ledger migration would open a category of buyer that currently says no on principle. Vertical integration is accelerating, which makes this mismatch structural rather than an edge case.
- Franchise networks need decentralized billing and brand-kit templating that actually replicates. One franchisor built its own Stripe-backed billing page because the vendor would not support decentralized billing, then discovered that brand kits would not carry typography across 55 offices. This required 50 font variations to be applied by hand.
- Four separate team leaders requested team-level administration: a master control panel, roles and permissions, at-mention collaboration. One described an assistant "operating as me inside there" as a governance problem her CRM cannot solve.

FINDING

3



Measurement is the most broken function in the brokerage

This is the most consistent finding in the sample and the least glamorous. Brokerages of every size cannot see their own numbers without manual work, and the reports they most need are the ones nobody ships.

“A lot of reports that people put together from different systems takes weeks to get them done, because they’re not the highest priority. And then somebody gets the data. So how do we make that so it’s almost instantaneous?”

— Technology leader, well-established Florida independent with title, mortgage and insurance in-house

The specific reports named as missing were remarkably consistent: per-agent gross commission income, company dollar, net profit, effective commission rate and cost of sales; churn attributed to company dollar lost with a destination and a reason code; and funnel conversion from inbound lead to opened escrow. A 166-agent Texas owner who had spent six months and 60-hour weeks building his own operating system was asked whether he had per-agent profitability. His answer was two sentences long:

“Well, I know that. I just don’t know it per agent.”

— Owner, 166-agent Texas independent

At the top of the market the gap is the same shape. A California team leader running 226 transactions and \$376 million year to date described her forecasting capability in full:

“The best way we can predict or we can assess our success is with open escrows and closed escrows. If I could know every day how many buyer leads and seller leads we actually had and how many of those people turned into appointments and how many of those appointments turned into showings and how many of those showings turned into offers, then I could know that, okay, if I have 10 leads come in on a Monday, three weeks later, I’m going to open three deals. We just don’t have that ability to forecast based on inbound inquiries to escrows opened. You know, there’s just not that much forecasting that goes on in our business.”

— Team leader, 35-agent California team, \$376 million as of eight months into the year

The most telling instance came from a Georgia owner whose sales manager saw her own operating numbers for the first time in a vendor meeting. She had come from a large e-commerce company. Her reaction, as he relayed it, was “this is what we needed... I didn’t know you had this.”



“We just went through a really complicated process of trying to get all our numbers together for the board meeting with lots of errors because everything is manual. You’re pulling spreadsheets. It’s not an easy process.”

— Executive, multi-brokerage portfolio holding company

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- Reporting sells the platform. In this sample, the reports brokers cannot produce are the reason two firms bought a platform and the reason three others built one.
- Structured data capture at the point of entry is the precondition, and it is routinely skipped. One owner discovered his fee income was unattributable because transaction fees were captured as free text rather than a controlled list — the fix is a dropdown, and he implemented the product without one.
- Agent-facing dashboards are a retention instrument. Two owners independently described putting per-agent production, goal tracking and lead-source split in front of the agent at every login as the retention play.
- There is no credible third-party cost-per-transaction benchmark, and its absence is now a sales obstacle. A brokerage-operations vendor in the sample identified its single biggest barrier as brokers not knowing what they currently spend to take a file from contract to close: “they 100 percent do not know that number.”

FINDING

4



Compliance and transaction review is the top AI use case, but these brokers have not bought it

Across independents, franchise affiliates and enterprise operators, the first AI application brokers name is transaction file review. The pain is quantified, the labor is visible and the willingness is real. Purchase, in this sample, has not happened.

“We feel like Luddites. We have a number of staff doing [transaction management] transactions and compliance overview and our employee overhead is ridiculous. So we would like to figure out how to streamline that. We know there’s a way. We just don’t know how to do it and we don’t know which AI tool that we should be using.”

— Co-founder, five-company franchise affiliate group

An 80-agent Florida owner has been carrying the same problem for a decade and blames the tooling directly:

“Compliance and the chasm between agents and staff. The staff get frustrated that the agents don’t get it right but the staff has a job because the agents don’t get it right. And the tech isn’t helping us, the tech is making that worse. And so that is my today problem. It’s been the problem for 10 years. Like it’s the dead horse problem we always have.”

— Owner, 80-agent Florida independent

Her most concrete request is also the smallest: required fields. Her transaction platform allows a seller to sign a disclosure without completing it, which pushes the defect downstream into a compliance department. That is a form-validation feature, not an AI feature.

Two structural notes matter more than the demand itself.

1. The buyer wants to be told which tool

More than one broker asked, effectively, for a recommendation rather than a demo. One executive said his own evaluation capability ran out early in the conversation: “You are over my head.”

Vendors selling into the mid-market should assume the buyer cannot compare architectures and will lean on a trusted third party to do it.

2. The regulatory corpus does not exist in machine-readable form

A brokerage's own in-house AI engineer who wanted to ground a compliance agent on authoritative source material made the most specific unmet request in the sample:

"Is there a place where I could fetch all the regulation to ingest it and use it in an agentic flow to check matching the regulation? I think it's better to have all the regulations pulled and ingested into an internal RAG and do an agentic flow with grounding. So whenever it says something is right, it's grounding on real data. But I just need a place to fetch all the data."

— In-house AI engineer, Southern California multi-line independent

He also asked the harder question: how supersession and deprecation are represented when rules change monthly. Nobody on the call could name a source. The best available answer was an introduction to a state association executive. A canonical, versioned, crawlable feed of state real estate regulation and forms — with effective dates and supersession semantics — does not appear to exist, and every AI compliance product in the market implicitly depends on one.

"We have a lady sitting there and she doesn't always catch all the... She literally is opening up loops, checking for signatures and half the time she doesn't catch what's missing."

— Co-founder, same five-company franchise affiliate group



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- Per-file pricing is a differentiator. The one compliance product that got a second meeting in this sample did so on a per-file model rather than a monthly contract, which the buyer named as the thing that "caught my eye." The same buyer immediately asked whether the price was too good to be true — price alone is not a strategy.
- Human review is failing and this changes the ROI conversation. The comparison is against a person who catches roughly half, not perfection.
- Grounding, citation and audit evidence are the product. Brokers named hallucination and broker liability as their first objection: "I worry about it trying to be the broker or attorney."
- There is a dozen-vendor crowd forming in this category. Differentiation will come from data provenance and workflow depth, not from the model.

FINDING

5



The system of record will not release its data

Three firms with nothing else in common described the same problem in three different ways.

“Where I’m more rigid on is there has to be some integration. Despite all the promises, it’s not a fluid communication. So we have swivel chair integration where people are re-keying data.”

— Enterprise executive, Canadian multi-brand group, 1,200 agents in its largest market

“Any data that I can pull out of [the back office]. I know they’ve got great reports, probably the only reason why we’re still sticking with it. I was manually doing all that, which is one hell of a tedious freaking task. So instead of taking me four hours to do it, here, plug it, let it run behind the scenes and in 20 minutes it spits it out for me. Instead of hiring an assistant for 40 grand or 50 grand a year.”

— Broker of record, 550-agent Canadian franchise group

Two related observations. First, the incumbent back office in this sample retains its position on reporting rather than product quality. Several brokers said they stay because the reports exist, not because the software is good. Second, data extraction is the practical gate on every AI initiative discussed in these conversations. Firms that had solved it were the only ones with AI in production at scale. One had built a unified repository spanning transaction, agent, consumer, website and marketing data before layering a model-agnostic orchestration interface on top.



“They said there’ll be API costs and we’ll just pass those right to you. We’re not making money off that, but we don’t have visibility to how much all of that is going to be. So something that seems cost effective may end up not being cost effective.”

— Executive, multi-brokerage portfolio holding company

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- Predictable, transparent API pricing is a competitive weapon. Pass-through costs with no forecast are treated as unquantifiable risk and stall deals.
- Migration paths off legacy versions matter more than new-version features. A large customer on an older release is a customer who cannot get data out and is therefore evaluating replacement.
- Brokers increasingly frame the data layer as something they must own and the intelligence layer as something they will rent. That split is now the default advisory position and vendors should expect to be evaluated against it.
- T3 Sixty is working with the Real Estate Standards Organization on a data dictionary for brokerage operations data, extending the standards approach that already exists for listing data. Technology companies with a stake in interoperability should engage with that work.

FINDING

6



A consistent challenge is the pricing model, not the price

Brokers in this sample criticized how software is metered far more often than what it costs. The recurring complaints were specific.

PRICING COMPLAINT · What brokers said in this sample

- 1 **Per-seat licensing** MOST CITED
Priced against total agent count while adoption runs at a fraction of it. Named as the brake on new purchases by owners, whether nine or 90 seats.
- 2 **Seats the product cannot serve**
One team leader pays a portal CRM tier for 11 users, three of whom are administrators and an automation account not connected to the portal at all.
- 3 **Contact-count caps**
A luxury operation with 6,000 contacts sits on a plan capped at 1,000, which limits the AI prospecting tool it is paying for to a sixth of its database.
- 4 **Team-tier penalties**
Database pricing tiers charge a nine-agent team materially more than the same tools cost a solo agent, for tools the agents underuse.
- 5 **Minimum seat commitments**
A 55-office franchisor was refused decentralized billing because it would not commit to enough seats, and built its own billing page instead.
- 6 **Unpredictable usage pricing**
Model and token costs cannot be forecast month to month, which several buyers named as a reason to prefer a flat maintenance fee or to run models internally.
- 7 **Pass-through API fees**
Quoted as a flat fee plus a monthly recurring fee per brokerage, with API costs passed through at an amount the buyer cannot see in advance.

Per-seat pricing draws the most criticism because it is priced against a headcount and consumed by a fraction of it.

“We really try to minimize the number, the amount of tech we bring on and, you know, it’s per seat. It just gets really expensive and things are changing so quickly. The margins are getting so slim and so, you know, to keep our agents making the money they need to make and us making the money we need to make out of it, which is slimmer, we don’t have another slice to give for more tech that isn’t better.”

— Owner, 80-agent Florida independent

The funding constraint underneath that sentence deserves attention. A small New York independent declined a marketing platform it liked on price, and separately declined to introduce a \$100 to \$200 transaction fee that would have funded it, because no competitor in its market had moved first and commission conversations were already under pressure. That is the demand-side limit on every per-agent-priced product sold into a small brokerage in 2026.

One commercial pattern in the sample is worth copying. A portfolio holding company had a \$50,000 annual contract stalled for a full year on budget. The deal moved when the vendor offered a phase-one entry at roughly \$7,500 — under \$1,000 per operating brokerage — that enabled the platform and value before any AI agent was built.



“Can we at least find \$7,000 this year to get them on this? I think we’re still going to get value by it just being available because it can start querying stuff. Even if we haven’t created AI agents yet, we can still use it as a query tool.”

— Executive, multi-brokerage portfolio holding company

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- Price against something the buyer can predict and connect to value: files, transactions, outcomes. Per-file compliance pricing and per-transaction operations pricing both earned unprompted approval in this sample.
- Do not bill for seats the product cannot serve. One team leader is paying a portal CRM tier for three seats that are two administrators and a bot.
- Phase-gated entry pricing converts stalled enterprise deals. Budget cycles, not conviction, are what hold them.
- Token-based and usage-based AI pricing are currently liabilities in this buyer set. Brokers said repeatedly that they cannot forecast it, and at least one is planning to run open-weight models internally specifically to escape it.

FINDING

7



Adoption is the product

Every broker in this sample who has been in the business more than a few years buys against a memory of software they paid for and nobody used. The benchmark figures cited by T3 Sixty advisors on these calls — roughly 15 to 20 percent adoption for most brokerage-provided technology, 40 to 50 percent for the strongest CRMs — were not disputed by any broker who heard them.

The scar tissue is specific. One Southern California independent bought a recruiting data platform, lost its recruiter a week later and cancelled a year afterward:

“When the recruiter left, it died. It never really was alive.”

— Broker of record, Southern California multi-line independent

A franchise affiliate in Texas wrote a six-month performance condition into an AI contract nearly a decade ago, invoked it and received a check back for \$133,000. He described the deliverable as one activity: onboarding agents.

Two findings complicate the usual advice:

1. Full adoption is not automatically a win

A Florida independent that requires every agent to log into its proprietary platform for everything reported that universal adoption concentrates rather than resolves the problem:

“Our system has 100 percent adoption, not 99. And that’s part of the issue. Everybody has to log in for it, for anything, makes it that everybody has to adopt it. And that’s why it becomes a tool that when something goes imperfect it’s a mess for them. But because our system is the backbone of the operation, you obviously hear all of these things. Where you have companies out there that use systems that don’t integrate, then obviously the broker never even heard about the problems with the technology.”

— Co-owner, Florida independent with a proprietary agent platform

The same firm made a second observation that most vendors should act on. Defects in a handful of daily-use surfaces poison perception of the entire platform, and features that were fixed long ago stay broken in users’ minds because nothing tells them otherwise. Its leadership is building an in-product change-communication layer for exactly that reason.

2. The brokerage cannot see its own adoption data

The same firm — which describes itself as a data company — could not settle an internal argument about adoption with evidence:

“I don’t know if we have data around individual user journeys inside of [the platform]. It’s getting a little annoying, to be quite honest, to have our leaders being led by perception in a data-driven company. I wonder if this is not the moment to establish data-driven insights on the actual adoption.”

— Co-owner, Florida independent with a proprietary agent platform



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- Product analytics inside brokerage platforms is an unserved need. Per-user journey instrumentation, exposed to the broker, would settle adoption debates and would justify renewals.
- Adoption evidence sells better than feature depth. As one T3 Sixty advisor summarized what a small brokerage owner actually needs to hear: productivity increases, and everybody is using it. "What else do you need to know about this thing?"
- Depth of adoption at the branch or team leader level predicts satisfaction more reliably than agent training. The bottleneck is the leader.
- The reframe several brokers responded to is design guidance: build technology that uses the agent rather than technology the agent has to use. Surface the next action and pre-draft the work rather than presenting an interface to learn.

FINDING

8



Vendors lose existing customers at migration, not at renewal

Two franchise networks with no relationship to each other raised the same complaint unprompted: their platform vendors market almost entirely to prospects and leave migrating customers to fend for themselves.

“Now this is my one frustration. Actually, if there is a negative, it is this. [The vendor’s] marketing is dreadful. It is based almost exclusively to net new clients. There is very little being created for existing clients who have to migrate. So I’ve had to create a demo reel, a three-minute highlight video, because they don’t. But I shouldn’t have to. I’ve created a behind-the-curtain, 45-minute deep dive. I’m now building out a video repository of task-specific how-tos as well as overview videos for each of the sections. I’m building out the library that I need to bring over the next group.”

— Technology executive, Canadian master franchise network

“A lot of tech companies aren’t going to be around because of all of these mergers and going to internal tech. You’d think the people that they should be speaking to first are their existing clients.”

— Technology executive, Canadian master franchise network

At a second network the same failure showed up as simple ignorance of the product. A T3 Sixty advisor asked the franchisor executive whether his company used a module his own platform vendor had already shipped. His answer was that he had never heard of it.

The implementation experience compounds it:

“I feel like it’s how it is with every third-party technology company we deal with. They scream at the top of their lungs how great and how supportive and how easy onboarding is going to be. And then as soon as you start getting into it, everything they tell you is like, well, it’s not really like that, that really doesn’t work. And we have gotten our teeth kicked in.”

— Executive, 55-office U.S. franchisor

Two further migration blockers were named precisely. Feature parity with the legacy product decides whether power users move at all — one network’s most active user of a legacy email campaign tool “has categorically said I am not moving because it’ll be a backwards move for me.” Silence on unshipped modules erodes goodwill faster than a delay does.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

The counter-template

The same Canadian executive who delivered the sharpest criticism also described, in detail, the vendor behavior that turned his network around. This included converting an 850-agent brokerage from a hard no into an early adopter. This is the most actionable passage in the sample for a technology company:

- A visible in-product roadmap with customer idea submission, and a named human who responds. "I've logged ideas of what I thought they should do and two days later I get an email saying the team loved it. It's on the roadmap."
- A short, stated bug SLA. "A long fix now is two weeks."
- A new-product team separated from the legacy team, so the new product does not inherit the old backlog or the old culture.
- Early feature access for large customers, toggled on individually where the product manager wants that customer's feedback.
- Transparent prioritization logic. "Sometimes we aren't getting the thing that we want in the order we want it. But I am buying into the logic they're using."

His summary is the outcome any vendor in this position should be aiming at: "What they'd actually done is understated."

FINDING

9



Roadmap silence is freezing third-party purchasing

Consolidation at the franchisor and platform level has produced a purchasing freeze among affiliates who cannot learn what their parent will provide. This is a timing problem for every technology company selling into franchise networks in the current cycle.

“It’s almost like we’re in between. What I saw at convention, the agent-side platform, which does have some AI in there, was really impressive. And when it comes to answering your question about the back office — no, it feels pretty dark.”

— Co-founder, five-company franchise affiliate group

The freeze extends to individual producers. A Vermont solo agent doing \$40 million in annual sales volume put a project management purchase on hold because she had been told her brokerage would provide task management tools when a platform rollout reaches her firm in 2027 — an announcement that is suppressing third-party purchases today.

A related and underappreciated gap: brokers changing affiliation cannot see what they are double-paying for. One \$120 million luxury operation moving between brands had no view of which tools the new brokerage covers, which it is paying for twice, or what portion of its current stack it actually uses. No product supplies that view.



“Being a [franchise brand] company, we’re all kind of sitting back waiting to see what [the franchisor] does or doesn’t do. You know, there’s a lot of talk. We’ll see if there’s any action or not or what kind of action there might be and opportunities there that might save us some money in the tech world. It may not. I don’t know.”

— CEO, Texas and Oklahoma franchise affiliate

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR A TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

- Affiliates in a consolidating network are not saying no. They are saying not yet, and they may say yes to anything that is explicitly complementary to what the franchisor will provide.
- Ambiguity favors the incumbent. Sales motions in this segment should lead with what the franchisor platform does not do and is not scheduled to do.
- For franchisors and platform brokerages: roadmap silence has a measurable cost in affiliate trust and in the credibility of the eventual launch.

SIGNAL

What brokers are building, and why it should concern vendors

Five firms in this sample are building or have built core platform components in-house. Three more have replaced commercial products using general-purpose AI tools. In every case the trigger was a measurement or workflow requirement that no vendor met.

- A 166-agent Texas independent built a brokerage operating system over six months at 60 hours a week, wiring roughly 10 APIs into it, because he could not see fee income, company dollar or per-agent profitability anywhere else. The accounting integration still does not reconcile.
- A 50-agent Florida independent has run its own all-in-one platform for more than a decade and is rebuilding it, including its own e-signature, at a current run rate under \$300,000 a year. Its owner expects the technology, not the brokerage, to carry the enterprise value.
- A Florida independent operates a proprietary platform as the mandatory backbone of the business and is now being courted by a large MLS to co-develop its member technology stack.
- A 35-agent California team rebuilt transaction management and financial reporting in-house after failing to get adoption on two commercial products.
- A Georgia owner has vibe-coded a working agent onboarding suite and wants to extend it to full client transaction management, but says plainly: "I don't know when or how we would get there right away."

Two counter-voices in the sample are worth as much as the trend itself. A 160-agent Canadian owner argues that his partners have the sequence backwards — that platform investment before user base is the risk rather than a moat:

"Compass is awesome and powerful and they have awesome tech, but nobody cares. Nobody went to Compass for their tech. Nobody's going to come to [us] because of the tech. However, it could be a great retention tool. Instead of spending half a million dollars on tech, let's spend half a million dollars on M&A."

— President, 160-agent Canadian independent

And a portfolio holding company executive described the accumulating cost of distributed do-it-yourself AI across independently operated firms:

"We now probably have like a thousand janky things put together in [one brokerage], for example, using Claude versus a systemic, streamlined thing, which is what we've been trying to do."

— Executive, multi-brokerage portfolio holding company

The commercial reading

Build activity of this kind is a demand signal with an expiry date. The operators doing it describe it as expensive, slow and something they would rather have purchased. A 1,500-agent franchise affiliate stated the general case for buying the capability rather than assembling it: "we headed down that path without a company to do it, and it just would have taken us forever." The window for a vendor to convert a builder into a buyer closes once the build reaches production and becomes an identity.

THE BUYING PROCESS

How brokers buy in 2026

Nine patterns in this sample describe the purchase process itself. They matter as much as the demand.

PATTERN · What it looks like in practice

- 1 **Pain threshold, not ROI**
Switching happens when the current process becomes intolerable, not when a model shows payback.
- 2 **Phase-gated entry works**
A stalled \$50,000 annual contract moved on a roughly \$7,500 phase one that delivered value before full deployment.
- 3 **Cost rises before it falls**
Implementation runs in parallel with existing process for a period. Sell time reallocation, not headcount reduction.
- 4 **The back office is often family**
Cost-out software cannot be sold where the staff being displaced are relatives. One vendor in the sample moves to the next prospect when it hears "I cannot get rid of my staff."
- 5 **Long proof cycles**
6 to 12 months to implement, at least a year before return on investment is assessable.
- 6 **Land and expand at scale**
Large brokerages buy small packages and expand if the product works. Small brokerages are slow, single-decision buyers who are more cautious with the first purchase.
- 7 **The buyer may not be the evaluator**
Several principals deferred technical evaluation entirely and asked for a recommendation. Assume a trusted third party will be consulted.
- 8 **Senior producers hold a veto**
At least one deal in the sample died when top producers said the change would suit new agents but not them.
- 9 **Volume crowds out systems work**
Firms at peak production defer systems purchases precisely when the need is greatest.

One line from a solo producer doing \$60 million in annual sales volume captures the first of those patterns better than any framework. Asked why she keeps two separate e-signature accounts at \$250 a year rather than consolidating:

"It has to be painful for me to fix it."

— Solo producer, Texas luxury market, more than \$60 million in annual sales volume

The corollary is what finally moved her on a different problem: "the pain of not having a full-time marketing or full-time operations person became too great in May. I had to solve the problem."

WHITE SPACE

Where the demand is loudest and nobody is selling

The following were named by brokers in this sample as needs, with no vendor identified by the broker or by T3 Sixty advisors on the call. They are ordered by how often and how independently they surfaced.

UNMET NEED - What brokers described	
1	Commissions without a ledger migration A commissions and split engine that syncs bidirectionally with the general ledger a multi-entity operator already runs. Raised independently by two multi-line firms.
2	Per-agent profitability and churn attribution Company dollar, net profit, effective commission rate and cost of sales per agent, plus churn with destination and reason code, inside the platform the broker already runs.
3	A machine-readable regulatory corpus Canonical, versioned, crawlable state regulation and forms with effective dates and supersession semantics, suitable for grounding a compliance agent.
4	Team and multi-entity administration Master control panel, cross-entity roll-up reporting, per-brand and per-office configuration, role-based permissions and at-mention collaboration.
5	Answer engine optimization as a service Measured, defensible visibility in AI search. Three brokers are doing it manually and one attributes real volume to it. No vendor was named by anyone.
6	Agent onboarding as tracked state A stateful, resumable onboarding process with triggers and visibility, rather than a form packet and a person who knows where things stand.
7	Product analytics inside brokerage platforms Per-user journey instrumentation exposed to the broker, so adoption arguments are settled with data.
8	A cost-per-transaction benchmark An independent benchmark of what it costs to take a file from contract to close. Its absence is blocking sales for at least one vendor in the sample.
9	Delegated access management Credential and access delegation for assistants and virtual staff. One top producer described losing an entire day relaying authentication codes.
10	Lead accountability without the phone number Follow-up accountability and reassignment where the brokerage does not own the number of record, because signs and syndication carry the agent's line.
11	Plain-language seller market reports Narrative market summaries generated from MLS data. Two producers are hand-building these because the available products deliver charts they consider unusable.
12	MLS policy for non-human data entry Not a product. An explicit position from MLSs on agentic identity, IP attribution and licensure for listing entry.

Two of these are industry work rather than product opportunities. The regulatory corpus and the MLS position on non-human data entry both require association, MLS or standards-body action. T3 Sixty is engaged on the brokerage operations data dictionary with the Real Estate Standards Organization and is available to convene on the items listed.

COUNTER-SIGNALS

What would make these findings wrong

A report that only explores demand would be misleading. Four contrary signals in this sample are well evidenced and should temper any roadmap built on the findings above.

1. Some of the highest producers report no product gap at all

A principal at a 400-agent regional firm, asked directly about gaps in her tools, answered: "not really. I probably have a personal gap in that I don't utilize them as well as I should." A team owner doing more than \$80 million in annual sales volume said the same in different words: "it hasn't failed me yet, but I may have failed AI because I'm not using it to its full capacity." Underuse of purchased capability is at least as large a problem as missing features.

2. AI fatigue is real among operators who are not hostile to AI

"My feelings on AI bounce around a little bit these days. I think everybody got really hot and heavy about, you know, how much of the greatest change that this is going to have at a macro level, and you're even, I don't know, starting to see some fatigue around it from some people. It'll be interesting to see where people are going and continuing to go with it or if it keeps steam at all. I have my doubts."

— Executive, 3,500-transaction franchise affiliate operating in two states

A related signal from the vendor side of the sample: the market is tiring of chat interfaces specifically. One operations platform executive described the dominant pattern in real estate AI as "essentially the AI wrapper — hey, ask our AI a question," and concluded "there is no leverage there." A T3 Sixty advisor went further, arguing the term itself has become "a derailer of the conversation."

3. Simplicity beats sophistication in agent-facing products

A Texas franchise affiliate deliberately deployed the least sophisticated AI tool it could find and private-labeled it:

"From an AI perspective, I would say it's pretty elementary. But if you're a Realtor, that's a good thing, because we're pretty elementary."

— CEO, Texas and Oklahoma franchise affiliate

4. Volume crowds out systems work

The clearest explanation in the sample for why demand does not convert to purchase came from the team leader with the most acute reporting need in the entire set:

“At the moment there’s some of that stuff that doesn’t seem that important. When it’s like you’ve got 350 transactions to do, trying to create systems that might make life easier and better don’t seem quite so urgent.”

— Team leader, 35-agent California team

A vendor that cannot show value inside the operating rhythm of a busy brokerage will lose to the status quo regardless of how well the product matches the stated need. In this sample the implementation window brokers described was 6 to 12 months, with return on investment not assessable for at least a year.

IMPLICATIONS

Implications by company type

CRM and agent platforms

- The requirement is one system carrying native marketing automation, funnels, templates and sequences — buyers in this sample explicitly rejected a best-of-breed CRM plus a bolt-on marketing suite.
- Team and multi-entity administration is the differentiator: roles, permissions, at-mention collaboration, a master control panel and a contact model that spans sale, lease and management without re-creating the client.
- Portal ownership of the CRM has become a live liability. Two independent firms described a portal-owned CRM operating inside their customer database, in near-identical language, and both are shopping alternatives.

Back office, accounting and commissions

- The unserved buyer is the multi-entity operator. A commissions module that reads and writes to the general ledger the CPA already uses would remove the single most common objection in this sample.
- Per-agent profit and loss, effective commission rate and churn attribution are the reports that decide the deal.
- No AI-native brokerage accounting product was identified by any participant, and horizontal small-business AI accounting tools have not been adapted to brokerage economics.

Transaction management and compliance

- Fluid, verified data flow to the back office is now a stated purchase condition. Re-keying between transaction management and commission accounting was named by the largest enterprise in the sample as its principal complaint.
- Form completeness validation, document versioning, buyer and listing filtering and file lifecycle management were all named as concrete defects in incumbent products.
- Configurable brokerage business policy — not just regulatory compliance — is a requirement. Whether the system permits a double-ended deal or a client credit is a business decision the broker wants to set.

Marketing technology

- Done-for-you beats do-it-yourself. Self-serve template libraries are already provided at most firms in this sample and are going unused; the demand is for turnkey production an administrator can execute.
- Neighborhood and market data on community pages was requested repeatedly, at price points that match the market. Census and lifestyle demographics do not satisfy it, and per-call API pricing forces brokers to choose between live data and affordability.
- Answer engine optimization (e.g., Google's AI summary of a search result) is a category with demonstrated marketing results. This sample had three independent, unprompted requests and no vendor currently is serving it as a managed, measured service. One owner attributes displacement of roughly 20 percent of her web portal volume to answer engine results and has no way to defend or improve the position.

Data and AI infrastructure

- The enterprise wrapper is the desired product: customer deployment with single sign-on and roles, maintained connectors to MLS and back-office systems, approval gates and audit evidence, model routing with cost control, spend visibility and a training and adoption commitment.
- Brokers are being advised to own the data and workflow and rent the harness between the model and the data. Vendors should expect to be evaluated on which side of that line they sit.
- Agentic labor substitution has a live regulatory blocker at the MLS. One portfolio firm has a six-position reduction to two waiting on an unanswered question about non-human listing entry, identity and IP attribution.
- Model-cost predictability is a purchasing criterion. Vendors who absorb model routing and token risk win against vendors who pass it through.

Closing observation

The brokers in this sample are not technology skeptics. Several are running production AI, one has built a unified data repository with a model-agnostic orchestration layer, and another has an in-house AI engineer grounding a compliance agent. What they share is a refusal to buy on promise, formed by a decade of paying for seats nobody used.

The commercially important consequence is that the burden of proof has shifted. In this sample, the questions that decided purchases were not about capability. They were: What does this cost per unit of work? Who else has actually adopted it? What happens to my data when I leave? What do I have to change about how my people work before it pays?

A technology company that can answer those four questions with evidence is selling into a market where the demand is documented, specific and largely unserved. A company that answers them with a demo is competing against a broker who has decided to build it on their own.

Appendix

Method, scope and limits

T3 Sixty reviewed every recorded advisory conversation in its meeting archive between May 28 and August 28, 2026 — 527 meetings in total. Of those, 140 included brokerage-side participants. More than 50 carried substantive technology content and formed the evidence base for this report.

The sample spans a deliberate range of brokerage types:

- Independents from nine agents to more than 4,000
- Franchise affiliates in the United States and Canada, including several on the Mega 1000
- Master franchise networks and franchisors with 55 or more franchise owners
- Multi-brokerage portfolio holding companies
- “Mega teams” made up of 21 or more agents and closing between \$80 million and \$450 million annually
- Brokerages operating property management, construction, title, mortgage and insurance alongside the brokerage

How the findings should be read

1. This conversation is evidence, not survey data

These are the stated priorities of a group made up mostly of brokers already engaged with an advisory firm. This biases the sample toward operators actively working on their business. Frequency counts describe this sample only.

2. Demand rarely presents as a product request

Asked directly what they wished existed, several of the highest producers in the sample said nothing at all. One answered the question with a pause and “I do not know.” Demand surfaced almost entirely when a specific tool was named and the broker described what it does badly. The findings of this report are therefore built from friction, not from wish lists — a methodological point that technology companies running their own discovery should note.

3. One interview series in the sample is agent-level, not brokerage-level

Six of the conversations belong to a T3 Sixty research series with top-producing agents and team leaders rather than broker owners. Their evidence is used here and labeled as such. It is directionally useful because teams are increasingly the buying unit, but it is not enterprise brokerage demand.

4. Advisor assertions are separated from broker statements

T3 Sixty advisors contribute significantly to the conversation on many of these calls. Every quotation here is broker-side unless the speaker is identified otherwise. Market statistics asserted by advisors were excluded where they could not be verified, except where the source is named in the text. Figures attributed to brokers are as stated on the call and have not been independently verified.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality

No brokerage or individual is named in this report. Speakers are described by role and by firm profile — size, model, geography. Quotations are drawn from recordings and transcripts and preserve the speakers' own words and informality. Light edits have been made for clarity. Where a brand or product name would identify a participant, it has been replaced in square brackets. Ellipses mark removed filler. Two engagements in the sample carry explicit confidentiality restrictions and were excluded entirely.



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