Upstream CIO Forum Attendee Questions

Q: What is the benefit of participation for small independent Brokers who do not have a large share of market or agents?

A: Please refer to the first question of our FAQ: "WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF UPSTREAM TO BROKERAGES OF ALL SIZES?" http://www.upstreamre.com/faq.html

Q: If an MLS wants to use Upstream but has a vendor that isn't on your list currently, how will it work? Can the vendor's API already added be accounted for?

A: All data recipients will need to use the API for Upstream in order to access the data. There is no difference in the API if you're a 3rd party vendor, an MLS or a franchisor.

Q: When will Upstream be available?

A: We are constantly evaluating new markets. Keep up with our progress here: http://www.upstreamre.com/updates

Q: Are County Auditors and Assessors involved? Do they provide data the preferred way?

A: RPR aggregates assessor data for the Upstream application.

Q: If we already receive a feed from an MLS that joins Upstream, would we now need to go to each broker individually for an agreement?

A: If you receive an MLS feed for search purposes, you will continue to receive those feeds. Upstream is not intended to replace your MLS. They will continue to syndicate MLS-wide data (IDX/VOW) for practitioners (licensed brokers). Upstream gives you control over distributing your data to 3rd party vendors such as marketing vendors, internal systems, portals, etc. This function would be turned off in your MLS.

Q: Can a vendor work with/receive data from individual agents instead of the entire brokerage/office if our customers are individual agents/teams?

A: Upstream is intended as a brokerage tool. Brokerages have the option to authorize agents of their firms to opt into distribution that the brokerage doesn't participate in as a whole.

Q: We use Skyslope, would it be possible in the future to enter the information into Skyslope and it gets pushed to the MLS for both listings and transactions?

A: The system is not designed to receive a feed from other applications. All listings originate in Upstream.

Q: How much push back are you getting from the MLS's?

A: We are getting some pushback that falls into two general categories.

1. A misconception regarding the long-term intent of Upstream. There are those that still believe Upstream is trying to replace the MLS. Once we educate teams regarding how Upstream works, our principles and restrictions, resistance wanes.
2. MLSs that monetize the syndication of your data to 3rd party vendors. Upstream not only returns distribution control to you; it also returns economic control to you.

Q: Can Brokers adopt Upstream before the MLS integration is live?

A: Yes. Brokers can leverage Upstream to manage the distribution of their data assets to their entitled vendors. You would continue to additionally enter the data into your MLS, therefore losing some of the efficiency benefits, but brokers believe the distribution benefits far outweigh the efficiency gains.

Q: Will any work be done pre-merger with legacy Bright MLS participant Boards/MLS's?

A: It's difficult to answer. We are beginning to work with brokerages in those areas but haven't started work with the MLS.

Q: This is Ryan Missman, w/ BackAgent, the UpstreamRE API is fast and reliable - we look forward to being able to use this in the future in our production environments. This will greatly improve the tech flow of the data - any thoughts or comments on how the paperwork processes will change? Will we still have to work with each of the 900+ associations and scribble on digital forms to get approval?

A: I expect the authorization process to be paperless once a license is in place with a data recipient.

Q: You mentioned that you do not push the data. Would an MLS cache the data or access the Upstream database in real time or at some set interval?

A: MLSs access the data and updates at intervals authorized by the brokerage to download the data and utilize it from there within their repositories.

Q: How do I get my firm added to one of the Beta groups?

A: We are constantly evaluating deployment areas. Contact Ray Gronowski (rayg@narrpr.com) and get the conversation.

Q: Will Upstream train the Agents? What level of training support is planned?

A: Our contract with RPR covers 24/7 support as well as training. We'll work with brokerages to train their agents in a fashion that best suits their needs (direct training, train the trainer, etc.)

Q: How does Upstream work in a market where MLS does not participate in RPR?

A: Upstream is not contingent on RPR participation.

Q: Can the functionality be used without the listing being entered in Upstream? (A listing pulled through the MLS RETS system.)

A: No

Q: Will Upstream be able to facilitate access to IDX data as well, as long as proper agreements are in place? Or will we still have to maintain those legacy feeds through our MLS's, thus creating a second feed source (Upstream) that must be integrated/maintained in order to take advantage of the benefits of the data on our own listings?

A: Upstream will not facilitate IDX. If you receive an MLS feed for search purposes, you will continue to receive those feeds. Upstream is not intended to replace your MLS. They will continue to syndicate MLS-wide data (IDX/VOW) for practitioners (licensed brokers). Upstream gives you control over distributing your data to 3rd party vendors such as marketing vendors, internal systems, portals, etc. This function would be turned off in your MLS.

Q: Is Upstream going to store all data from an MLS or only participating Broker data? Extending this to full IDX/VOW/back office etc. data sets?

A: Participating company data only.

Q: Are you working on automated methods of business rule implementation? What does the process look like if the MLS changes business rules?

A: To the extent that rule changes are published via metadata or other means that can be collected automatically, we can collect them automatically. RESO standards are evolving in this direction to support this process. In the meantime, MLSs will need to publish rule changes to RPR for implementation with sufficient notice, which we discuss at length during the implementation process.

Q: Is CRMLS in your Pilot program?

A: Not yet.

Q: Will vendors have access to the incomplete section if we would like them to, or do we have to activate the property in Upstream before a vendor has access?

A: Brokers will be able to designate in progress listings for distribution to vendors.

Q: Will future rollout follow the same approach?

A: One of the purposes of a pilot is to evolve and refine the implementation process. We are evaluating all aspects of the rollout and look for both efficiencies and ways to get economies of scale. Most importantly, we look to minimize impact to all stakeholders.

Q: Are there plans for SSO links from Upstream to login agents into MLS? Trying to understand agent user experience if enter listings in Upstream, but then want to use search/research tools in the MLS.

A: Upstream will support SSO from the MLS into the Upstream listing management application so that MLSs can integrate Upstream at the listing point of entry, where agents are used to going today.

Q: if broker comes up with different business rules from MLS, will Upstream have a way to translate those values to enter/translate/match into MLS requirements or broker's rules have to stay as a match with the MLS?

A: Upstream supports the overlay of a brokerage's business rules onto those of an MLS.

Q: Will upstream contain all of the data entry fields/rules used in the MLS? If so, will you then only display applicable fields in the interface to an agent based on the MLS they are participating in?

A: Upstream aggregates and uses all of the listing data entry fields and rules in the MLS, and enforces them if the listing has been designated for distribution to the MLS. The listing management form is customized to the distribution requirements of the listing as indicated by the brokerage.