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**JB:** Hello, hello, happy day everyone. I'm Janelle Brevard, NAR’s chief storyteller. Welcome to Drive With NAR. We're so glad you've joined us today. In this episode, I'm going to listen in on some tricks of the trade from some pretty awesome people. I'm happy to be sitting with two dynamic REALTORS®. Sam Medvene is from our nation's capital, Washington, D.C. And Kristy Hairston hails from the country music capital of Nashville. Kristy, the last time we talked, I'm not sure I told you about my affinity for country music and how I went and sat outside a hotel waiting for the Judds to show up.

**Kristy Hairston:** We did not talk about that!

**JB:** Naomi and Wynona.

**KH:** We did not talk about that, but you need to make another trip. Come on down to Country Music Hall of Fame.

**JB:** Well, that country music story is all for another day. But today we're going to talk about the innovations that are helping the two of you do your jobs and how the pandemic has changed things. So welcome, officially, Kristy and Sam.

**KH:** Thank you so much for having us.

**Sam Medvene:** Yeah, thanks so much for having us.

**JB:** I would like to hear for both of you. What's the market like where you guys are?

**KH:** It is an amazing market in Nashville. And I think with us being deemed essential, starting—from COVID—around April 2020, we have just consistently seen home sales continue to increase, even with the listing shortage that we have. And so that's interesting for us. We've seen that our tourism has continued to go up, as well as the second home market is up 46% year over year since March 21. That's amazing for Nashville. And I think the more that people have the option to work from home or do remote working, the second home is becoming more interesting in Nashville. And one interesting piece, you know, you said it already, you know, most of the time when people think of Nashville, they think, ‘Oh, country music.’ But the thing that's so interesting is Nashville created a Four Seasons, sold out and is creating a second unit. They just built the Conrad Hotel—that's the same one I always visit in Chicago. And I'm like, ‘That's amazing.’ We have a Conrad Hotel now that's connected to luxury condos. And we're getting a Ritz Carlton that's in development for 2023. So when you think of Nashville, know that there's this luxury market that is establishing itself, maybe from that second home, maybe from relocation of people from California or New York. But it is busy in Nashville. That's what I can tell you both.

**SM:** The market has been…it's been super-hot, similar to like what Kristy said, where it's just everything has been blowing up. And there's just a lack of supply. And I know we hear that nationally. And it's definitely true for the three markets out of Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. And especially in the suburban areas, in the detached homes, there's no real inventory. It's about 17% down year over year from the listings last year. And then actually, the interesting thing is that we did see an influx of listings in September, which was unique. And the market slowed a little bit—it was just a little bit of a divot in everything. And then it immediately crashed right back to the low inventory back in October and things picked up again and was a 25% difference between October and September as far as the volume of listings. So stuff is still really, really moving. It's still an active, active market. And the big change we see—and I think that's going to be a continuing to trend—is the change of the condo market. In our market, it's being so dense in the city that we have a lot of condos. And during the pandemic, that market took a pretty big hit. But now since businesses are starting to have individuals back into the office and start mandating hybrid-style works, I think it's going to be a continued trend where that market picks back up. And instead of the exodus of the city, which we saw in the past 18 to 24 months, we're going to see an influx again. But as a whole very, very healthy and just a lack of inventory.

**JB:** I'm actually curious to hear from both of you: How has the pandemic changed the way you do business from a technological standpoint?

**KH:** You know, I would say, specifically, video has changed a lot. If a buyer really needs to tour a property, to the first showing happening on FaceTime or video, is something that would have been outlandish five years ago, right, if you're talking to a buyer. And now because the properties are moving so fast, some of the buyers are like, ‘Hey, if you can get there in five minutes to go see it, let's video…let's figure it out. And then I'll go once we get under contract.’ That's been a huge change since the pandemic to me.

**SM:** Similar to what Kristy said, everything is now forcing the hand of being able to adopt technology. So things like Zoom and Google Meet in the past were ideal and maybe normal for millennials, including myself, and what we used to do during college and also with other clients that are first-time homebuyers. But really beyond that, it just wasn't standardly used. And so I think being able to move to that virtual setting not only made things super-efficient for everybody involved, it also just brought us into 2021. With being able to have utilization of such a vast amount of technology, and individuals—whether it's families or partners or kids being able to teach their parents or their grandparents how to actually use this and become comfortable with it. I mean, you know, in the past, I would have to potentially go from Maryland to Virginia, and it'd be an hour and a half between appointments to meet face to face, whereas now I just do those within 30 minutes spreads of each other online. So I think allowing technology to catch up in mainstream has been one of the biggest things that the pandemic has done, that I see as a win.

**KH:** Yeah, FaceTiming mostly, and then sometimes there's Zooms where we can record. That way the person can go back and review or they can review what we said while we were showing. And that's been helpful to a number of people. And then also you can use a tool to create and save and store that video in that client’s, let's just call it, dashboard or box so they can go back and review over time. So that's been really, really helpful.

**JB:** Stay right there, everybody. We'll be right back after a word about our sponsor.

**JB:** Is your CRM making you money? Does it save you time? If the answer is no, you might be stuck on old technology. Chime’s innovative platform is helping thousands of real estate pros to close more deals faster. Visit <Chime.ME/NAR> to schedule a free demo today.

**JB:** I'd love to hear from both of you what technology tools have really impacted your clients as well and really made things different for them in terms of the transaction, one of

**KH:** The one that stands out the most to me is Punch List. In this market, you know, with buyers moving fast, and sometimes you're not able to do full-out seller renovations, the best you can do is get a home inspection. And when you get that home inspection, having someone like Punch List that says, ‘Look, we'll do the inspection for you, we'll quote out—you know—whatever the issues are on this list.’ So the buyer has a way of knowing, ‘Look, if I can't get the seller to do any repairs, when I leave from here, I know that the estimate of the repairs that they found is X dollars.’ It's really helping the buyers be able to make wiser decisions, especially since there isn't a lot of opportunity, in some cases, to have the sellers make those repairs. So Punch List will be one. And then the second one is Earnest. And Earnest was a way for the buyers to send in their earnest money through the phone. The agent can go and make that request and say, ‘Hey, I want to go ahead and use this.’ And that's one of those [REACH tools](https://nar-reach.com/). But the buyer not having to deal with the check and us figuring out how to pick it up, because you don't always know the office’s schedules as to how much they're open or when are they open—using Earnest was really helpful for buyers during this time.

**SM:** Two of the REACH programs that I've utilized is—everybody talks about ‘Zillow says my house is worth this’ or ‘Redfin says my house is this.’ And a lot of times it's just difficult to do that. But one of the companies that NAR has supported through the REACH program is a company called House Canary. And this has been quite, quite accurate, at least in our markets. And every market varies, right. But House Canary has been a huge one for myself. And the second one being Knock. So Knock is a program that allows individuals to buy their home with cash. And then if they have a home to sell, they end up being able to not have a contingent offer. So this company will actually buy the home they want. And then the consumer will then rent it from this company until they sell their home. So it allows it to be freed up of contingencies and be way more of a competitive offer. And it's essentially allowing for everybody to be competitive in multiple-offer situations, which are super, super common nowadays.

**JB:** So the great companies that you guys just mentioned all came through the REACH program, which is NAR’s program to really identify these sort of emerging-prop tech companies that can really change the industry. Are there other places where you get your new technologies?

**KH:** I would say, yeah, REACH has been tremendously helpful. That was only like two. I have probably about eight of them that I could have mentioned and said, ‘Hey, these are very helpful,’ whether it was Glide or BoxBrownie. There are several of them. Sometimes they're in articles. Sometimes they're in the magazine. Sometimes it's that agent-to-agent networking like that we were able to do with the recent NAR Conference. So sometimes agents in other markets tell us about things that we didn't even know was available based on what's happening in market trends. So I just can't get away from that NAR networking as a way of how we figure out some new tools.

**SM:** Yeah, I love the conference expos, right. So you end up being able to get all of the different vendors in there, and you tend to find some pretty cool stuff and some cutting-edge things I'd never seen before. And I'm sure NAR also uses that as well to pinpoint and try to highlight some of these other programs and technologies that are coming through. The conference expos are phenomenal—one of my favorite things to do.

**JB:** Social media is a huge technological platform for many REALTORS®, and I know the two of you are really big on social. But some REALTORS® are still trying to find that sweet spot. So how do you engage followers on social media? What can they learn from you?

**SM:** Yeah, I think one of the biggest takeaways is just understanding the audience behind each, right? So with my parents and my other group of individuals and clients that sometimes some of them are only Facebookers, right, and understanding that when you're doing Facebook, it could be a mix of personal and professional. Whereas you go to LinkedIn, and LinkedIn is very landslide towards the professional side of stuff. And then you get to be a little bit more playful, which goes into Instagram and the new one TikTok. I think understanding the audience and then being able to put out your type of content and the stuff that makes you special.

**KH:** Everyone has been telling me, like, ‘Kristy, you’ve got to get on TikTok. Like all the agents—you know how REALTORS® are busy—we're on TikTok. And I opened it up and it just blew me away. I was like, ‘Listen, I'm going to need several tutorials for this.’ Sam you may be killing it in the game. And in TikTok, I am emerging. I do have a TikTok account. I have created my first video. But where I live is Instagram. And I even made my Facebook status that so people would know like, ‘Look, Facebook is going to be a highlight reel, you can connect with me, send me a direct message. But I live on Instagram.’ And then the second one for me is LinkedIn. I cannot express just how much LinkedIn has really helped. It’s a new way to reach out to them that they would never say on Instagram that I started this new job—or ‘I got a promotion’ would never show up on any of these other social sites. It's a way for me to just connect with them and provide them content. They much more want to hear my market update, more so than a video reel, which is what's really more popular in the social media context.

**SM:** To your point on LinkedIn, it's more a professional setting. And they're more into that type of numerical and quantitative type of data that is useful—short and sweet, to the point and you can really connect with that. I agree with you. It's a really underutilized platform that people just miss. But it's so, so watched, right? It's something that people really look at. And then I totally concur with Instagram Stories. I use Instagram Stories, too. That's the biggest, biggest amount of individual interactions I get on a day-to-day basis—by posting five to seven Instagram Stories during the day. And this will be one as well for us. But then being able to get interactions from clients, from other REALTORS®—and it's really grown that REALTOR® to REALTOR® network that I have—as well as being able to get to the clients to see what I'm doing.

**JB:** Sam, I can't let you get away from the topic of social media without asking you about Happy Flipping Friday. Tell us about that.

**SM:** For myself, it's doing a lot of renovation and development work. I've got a construction background, my father is a general contractor and owns his own business, which was my inspiration and my training—not knowing back in the day that that's going to be something that led to be such a huge foundation to my business and my experience. And so I'll do something called Happy Flipping Friday: Every Friday I go into weekly updates, just like HGTV renovation shows, on my own projects throughout the city and go into details of what individual pieces are of a build and what the process is like, what little nuances are and indoor potential pain points for each project. And I just really try to get the user involved. It's becoming such a big thing now where, if my clients or friends don't see me post, they'll shoot me a text and say, ‘Sam, what's going on? Are you OK? Why have you not posted Happy Flipping Friday today?’ And so it's been huge. I think being able to just be yourself and not necessarily be on the mainstream of stuff, but find out what makes you different, because that's what people are being attracted to.

**JB:** What has been the biggest technology game changer in the last five years?

KH: For me in the last five years, it's probably been what we can do with Google Workspace. I can't take that away because doing everything from Google Drive to video, uploading to YouTube, all of that being in the Google Workspace—if you can really work that to your advantage, it'll continue to help you save time. So that, I think, is really great. And then the other one is the QR comeback. I just have to say—I had no idea—the QR code—I mean, I thought it was dead so many years ago. But now when I go into a restaurant, and they have this QR code here, I'm like, ‘That's all we needed.’ When I go to do some open houses and put that QR code on the door, like, ‘Hey, scan here to make sure the seller knows you were here,’ instead of having that piece of paper out. Things like that, that can really help us to connect with consumers in a great way has been I feel like a game changer.

**JB:** I feel like the two of you are pretty tech-savvy. So what advice would you give to other REALTORS® about technology?

**KH:** You just have to get in. You just have to do it. I remember when, 10 years ago, people would say things like, ‘You’ve got to get on video because that's where it's going.’ And it took a while, you know, to really let that sink in. So they have to embrace the technology for what it is and get good at something. But also remember to make sure that you own the content on your platform. Don't give up on what you're doing with whether you're really good at—videos or you're really good at blogging—don't give up on those things as well. Try to embrace and do what you're really good at. That's what I would say: Just don't give up. If you need to hire someone, there are plenty of people that can help you do it, run it well. There are several businesses and opportunities to kind of outsource that out.

**SM:** Get involved and just start doing it, right—using the Nike motto. But being able to understand the audience, right—we were talking a little bit before on understanding the audience that you have for each of the various social platforms and just understanding that audience and then being yourself and finding your own niche. Every individual person has their own style, right? And so instead of trying to mainstream yourself with what you see everybody else do, I like doing the opposite. I like trying to find stuff that's unique about myself that attracts the people that I want to be around and then being able to use technology, whether it's a social media platform, whether it's filming technology, as additional tools on your tool belt to be able to service our clients as best as we possibly can.

**JB:** We like to do something called “In the Trenches” here on the show. What's that one story that you'll always remember where you were in the trenches to complete a transaction?

**KH:** I think it had to do with being just in the pandemic, with airlines, and people's flights getting canceled and things happening. And you know how you're in an intense contract? And this is the day of closing, and the buyer cannot get to closing. The airline cancelled. They can't get there. And the seller is not going to give you an extension on closing because they got two other backup offers that maybe more than yours. And you’ve got to figure out how to work this out. So through the use of virtual closings—like, just the states that really worked on how can we close virtually, how can we do a virtual notarize? What are the steps in order to make that happen?—saved a deal that would have been impossible. No way to do a mail away, no way for somebody to do power of attorney, no other way to make it happen except through that virtual closing. I mean, down to the wires. Kudos to all the people that kind of help in those trenches, because having some technology at your fingertips and having some state legislation that allows for those things really do make it possible for all of us to work in this environment.

**SM:** One of the things that I feel like kind of totally envelops everything that happened over the pandemic was a completely virtual transaction, which in the beginning of the pandemic was a little bit rare, right. I had a client that got referred to me from a past client. She ended up being up in New York and was stuck in a 600-square-foot apartment in New York and hadn't been out for months because of the pandemic being so rampant up there. And so what we did was we used the 360-degree camera to show her and be the eyes. And then she had her family come as well that were the eyes and ears on top of the technology. And we ended up going under contract, doing a whole home inspection—everything virtually—because there's PDF reports, we FaceTime through it. And then the first time she saw the home was at closing table, and even then, it was kind of a race to the finish line because a few things got delayed. The sellers were being a little bit difficult as far as giving an extension on it. Truly, that was one of the first times that everything was 100% virtual, and she just came in and essentially signed paperwork, which was very, very different and interesting.

**JB:** I have to thank the two of you. You have been absolutely great. Sam Medvene in Washington, D.C. Kristy Hairston in Nashville, where are we going to get back to and see the Judds. It's been great. Thank you for joining us here today.

**KH:** Thank you so much.

**SM:** Yeah, thanks so much for having us. It's been a true pleasure. Appreciate being involved.

**JB:** Thanks for joining us on this episode of Drive With NAR. Tune in every month on [magazine.realtor/drive](https://magazine.realtor/drive) or subscribe wherever you get your podcasts. Get more tips to boost your business at [magazine.realtor](https://magazine.realtor/).