A BUILDOUT EVALUATION GUIDE

# **AI data ingestion** for CRE marketing

How brokerages can cut manual entry out of the listing-to-market process, and what to look for in a system that claims to do it

INTRODUCTION

# In most brokerages, data gets typed in by hand, **once per asset, every time.**

Every brokerage has some version of the same workflow. A broker wins a listing. Someone, whether that's a marketing coordinator, an office admin, or the broker themselves, takes the deal details and turns them into a set of assets: a property site, a brochure, an offering memorandum, an email blast, a syndication feed. Each of those assets needs the same core facts:

SQUARE FOOTAGE | TENANT MIX | PRICING | CONTACT INFORMATION | ZONING

There is a better way though. Let's take a look at what this actually costs a brokerage in time and accuracy, and what "AI data ingestion" means as a category of tool built to solve it. AI Data Ingestion gives marketing and brokerage leaders a framework for evaluating whether a given system actually removes manual entry, or just relocates it.

## What's inside

THE COST

# What manual entry costs

## the average brokerage

Prior to AI being made for general availability, marketing tools were, for the most part, built as design tools first. They were built to help someone lay out a brochure or build a property site, on the assumption that a person would sit down and populate every field by hand. That made sense when the alternative was a printer and a graphic designer. It makes less sense now that the same deal data already exists somewhere else in the brokerage's systems, usually in whatever tool tracks the pipeline.

It's worth breaking this down into the specific costs, because they compound differently depending on the size and structure of a brokerage.

> None of these costs show up as a single dramatic failure. They show up as a **slow, steady drag on how fast a brokerage can move** and how much its marketing function can take on.

### 01 | TIME

Building a full asset kit from a blank template, correctly, can take a day or more per listing. At a brokerage moving a few dozen listings a month, that adds up to a meaningful chunk of a coordinator's total working hours spent on transcription rather than design or strategy.

### 02 | ACCURACY

Every manual re-entry point is a chance for a number to get typed wrong, a unit count to fall out of sync, or an old price to survive in one asset after it's been updated elsewhere. A brochure that lists last quarter's asking price doesn't just look unpolished. It can actively confuse a buyer or slow down a deal that's already moving.

### 03 | TURNAROUND

Momentum matters in CRE. A listing that takes a week to fully market has already lost some of the urgency it had the day it was won. Manual asset building is one of the more common reasons that gap exists.

### 04 | SCALABILITY

This is the one that's easy to miss. A brokerage that wants to grow its deal volume without proportionally growing its marketing headcount needs a workflow where asset production doesn't scale linearly with the number of listings. Manual entry makes that nearly impossible, because every additional listing is roughly the same amount of manual work as the last one.

### 05 | OPPORTUNITY COST

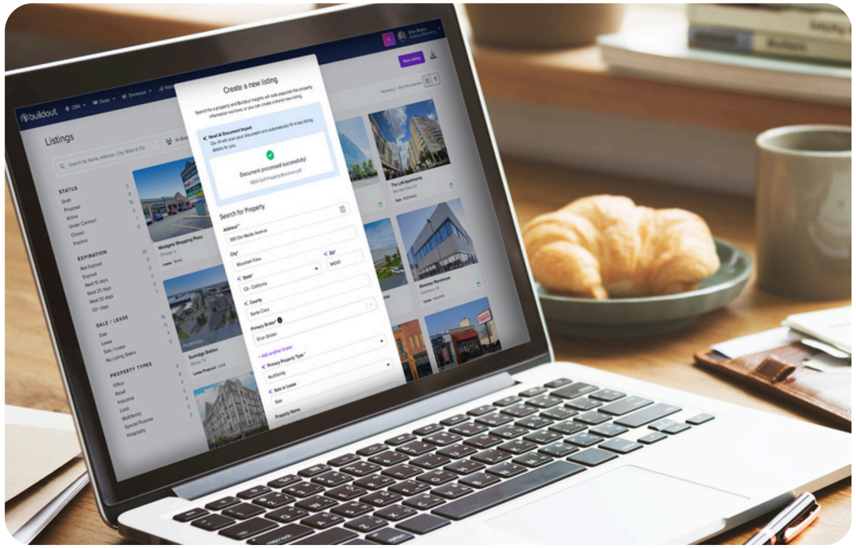
Every hour spent retyping a cap rate is an hour not spent on the parts of marketing that actually move a listing: positioning, photography selection, targeted syndication, follow-up campaigns. Manual entry doesn't just cost time. It crowds out the higher-value work that time could otherwise go toward.

DEFINITIONS

# What “AI data ingestion” **actually means**

The term gets used loosely, so it's worth defining clearly. AI data ingestion, in the context of CRE marketing, refers to a system's ability to read structured property and deal data, typically the spreadsheets a broker or coordinator already has on hand (rent rolls, tenant schedules, unit mixes, comps), and use it to automatically populate marketing assets, rather than requiring someone to manually retype that data into each asset one field at a time.

It is not the same as AI-generated design, which focuses on visual layout rather than data accuracy. It is not the same as a template library, which still requires manual population. And it is not the same as a basic single-file import, which typically only handles one document at a time and still leaves the rest of the deal's data to be entered by hand.




A REAL DATA INGESTION SYSTEM DOES THREE THINGS:

ONE

### Reads more than one source at once

A single listing rarely lives in a single spreadsheet. A system that can only ingest one file at a time just moves the re-keying problem from "retype it" to "reformat it and upload it five separate times."

TWO

### Maps the data to the right fields automatically

The system should recognize what a column of numbers represents (square footage, rent, tenant name) rather than requiring a person to manually match every field to a template slot.

THREE

### Covers the full range of assets a brokerage actually needs

Not just one template type. A tool that auto-populates a brochure but still requires manual entry for the OM and the site has only solved part of the problem.

THE FRAMEWORK

# A framework for **evaluating** an ingestion system

For a marketing or brokerage leader evaluating whether a system genuinely reduces manual entry, five questions are worth asking of any vendor or product.

01

### How many files can it actually handle at once?

A single listing is rarely captured in one spreadsheet. If a system only accepts one file at a time, someone still has to consolidate the rent roll, tenant schedule, and unit mix into a single document before anything gets automated, which just moves the manual work upstream instead of removing it.

02

### How much of the asset is actually built automatically?

"AI-powered" can mean anything from full population of every field to a single auto-filled headline. Ask what percentage of a typical asset is populated without manual input, and what still requires a person to fill in by hand.

03

### Does it cover the assets a brokerage actually needs, or just one?

A property site, a brochure, an OM, an email, and a syndication feed all need overlapping but not identical data. A system that only handles one of these still leaves most of the re-keying problem in place.

04

### Does automation compromise brand control?

Speed doesn't matter if every asset comes out looking generic or off-brand. A strong system should apply a brokerage's own templates, colors, and layout preferences automatically, not force a choice between fast and on-brand.

05

### What happens when deal details change after the upload?

Deal terms shift and pricing gets adjusted. Ask what it takes to update an asset once it's built: a fresh upload, a manual edit, or something closer to automatic.

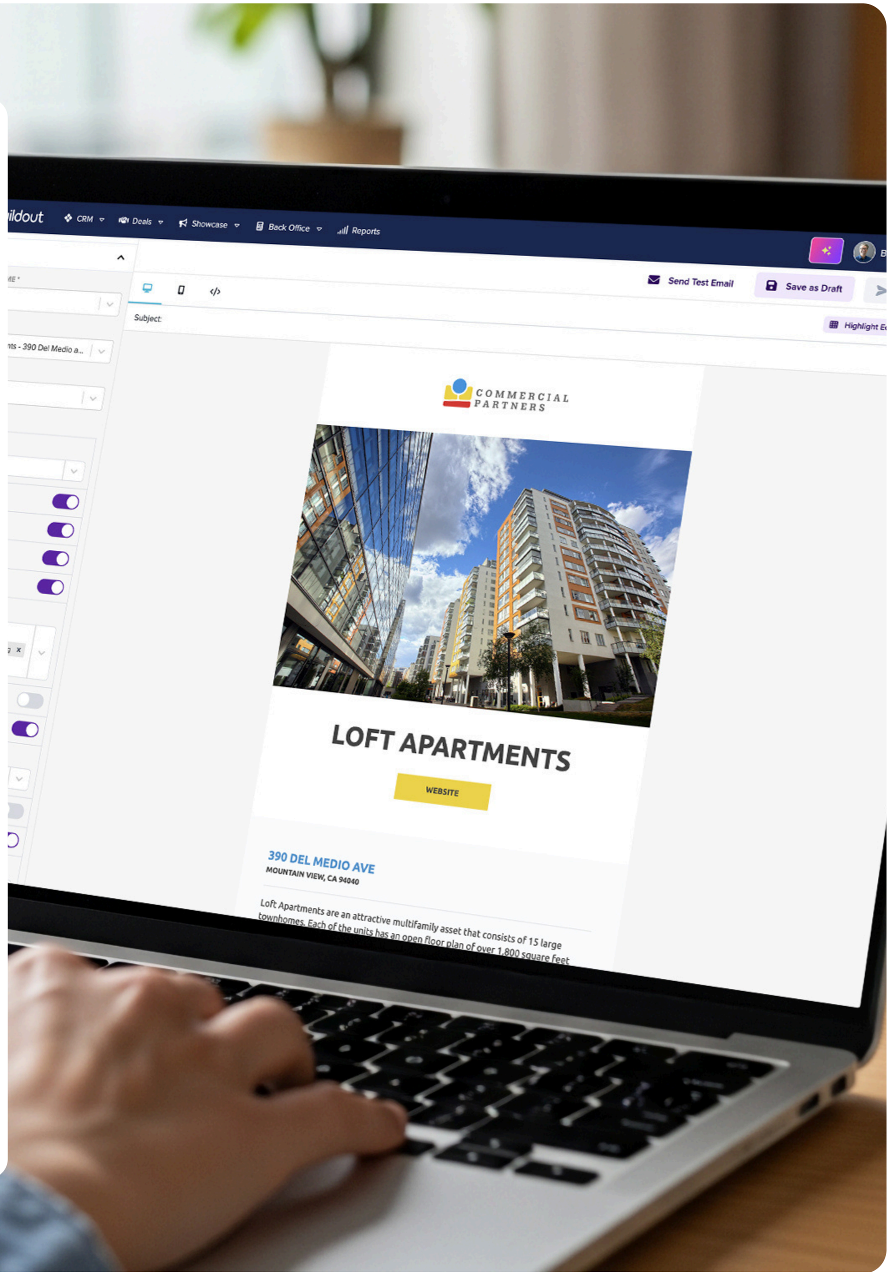
IN PRACTICE

# What this looks like **in practice**

It's easier to see how these principles play out with a concrete example. **Buildout's Showcase**, the marketing layer of its platform, uses AI data ingestion to read the spreadsheets a broker or coordinator already has on a listing, rent rolls, tenant schedules, unit mixes, and pull the data straight into the marketing assets built from it.

Anyone, be it a marketing coordinator or even a broker, can upload up to five spreadsheets at once rather than reformatting and entering each one by hand. Showcase's AI reads them and uses the data to auto-build the property site, brochure, OM, and email assets, styled to the brokerage's brand automatically. The marketing role shifts from retyping numbers into a blank template to reviewing and refining a version that's already largely complete.

This matters most in two kinds of brokerages: smaller firms where a broker or office admin is handling marketing alongside everything else on their plate, and larger firms where a marketing team needs to support a high volume of listings without linear headcount growth. In both cases, the constraint isn't creativity or design skill. It's the sheer volume of manual entry standing between a won listing and a fully marketed one.



# **Optimizing** your brokerage

The re-keying problem in marketing is really one instance of a pattern that shows up across CRE brokerages wherever tools don't share a common data foundation. The same dynamic exists in prospecting data that has to be manually copied into a CRM, pipeline stages that don't reflect what's actually happening on a deal, and commission calculations that have to be reconciled against numbers living in a separate system.

Every handoff between disconnected tools is another place where data can go stale, get mistyped, or simply not make the trip at all. Solving it for marketing assets alone helps. Solving it across the full lifecycle of a deal, from the first prospecting touch through pipeline, marketing, and close, is what actually removes the re-keying tax rather than just moving it to a different part of the workflow.

That's the standard worth holding any tool to, including the ones already in use at a brokerage today: not whether it has an AI feature, but whether it actually stops someone from typing the same fact twice.

**TALK TO AN EXPERT**

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**run your brokerage with Buildout**

**BOOK A DEMO**

**THE CHECKLIST**

## Questions to bring into a **vendor conversation**

For a brokerage evaluating tools in this category, a short list of direct questions tends to surface the real difference between genuine ingestion and a faster manual process:

- How many spreadsheets or files can be uploaded at once, and in what formats?
- Does it recognize and map data automatically, or does someone still need to match fields to a template?
- What percentage of a typical brochure or OM is populated without manual input?
- Which asset types does this cover: site, brochure, OM, email, syndication, all of the above?
- How is brand consistency maintained across auto-built assets?
- What happens to the workflow when a listing has unusual or incomplete data?

A vendor that can answer these clearly, with specifics rather than general claims about "AI-powered" marketing, is more likely to be solving the actual problem rather than repackaging it. **Check out our CRE tech buyer's guide to learn more.**