Executive of the Month: Eric Gordon, the mastermind behind RealPlus, LLC - Technology is what makes him tick

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- Eric Gordon is a man of varied interests - besides his wife and two teenage kids, his passions include the New York Yankees, the Rolling Stones, photography, airplanes and politics, among others.

However, technology is what really makes the 51-year-old Gordon tick.

"What fascinates me is the ever-changing nature of technology, especially computers," said Gordon. "Other industries tend to be far less dynamic, but there are new innovations almost daily when it comes to computers."

Gordon is the well-known mastermind behind RealPlus, LLC - a firm that he established in 1985 with just one client, Sulzberger-Rolfe. Today, after spending 27 years being myopically focused on helping agents and brokers in the New York City metropolitan area, RealPlus' impressive roster has grown to more than 300 clients consisting of firms of all sizes.

"Through curiosity, perseverance and focus we are continually finding ways to make life easier and more efficient for our clients, the industry and us," Gordon said.

With him at the helm, RealPlus delivers services that are used by nearly 100% of New York City's residential real estate industry. One of the first to migrate IBM's Informix DBMS from Unix to Linux, Gordon has assisted numerous local and national listings portals including Google and The New York Times to help design the initial New York City listings feed specification for their respective real estate websites.

"I've spent more than half of my life delivering technologies that benefit this industry and would venture to say there isn't anyone who's been doing it longer," he said. "We have at least one, and in many cases, more, of our applications being used by nearly every residential firm in New York, including the largest and smallest firms and all those in between."

Initially, real estate appealed to Gordon since it was one of a handful of industries that offered a sky's-the-limit income potential. As he delved deeper, however, Gordon became enamored with the significance of real estate in people's daily lives.

"I can't imagine a city more beautiful than ours, with all its unique architecture and the fascinating dichotomy of a four-story SRO hotel located between two brand new luxury high-rises," he said.

Today, deeply engrained in New York's technology for the residential real estate market, Gordon stumbled across an unused IBM XT PC in 1984, and was immediately hooked. At the time, he was working for minimum wage as an intern at Jeffrey Rodman & Associates on 57th St. - four stories above the Hammacher Schlemmer store.

"I played around with the computer while I was waiting to get my real estate license," he said. "I taught myself how to program and became their de facto IT guy - no one else working there even thought to turn it on and see what it could do!"

Always on the lookout for ways to make the best use of available technologies, Gordon is also the man behind the first Windows-based listings management system for Manhattan, first to allow home access for agents, and first to enable access to listings from PDAs and mobile phones. Under his leadership, RealPlus has become known as a pioneering organization, with its implementation of one of the first RETS initiatives in New York and real-time feeds to corporate websites.

The 2002 development of R.L.X. - a revolutionary software program that enabled New York's residential real estate industry to digitally share and exchange listings - added another feather to Gordon's cap.

"Prior to the introduction of the RealPlus Online Listings Exchange, firms used fax machines to send listings to one another each night and then key-punched the same information into their respective systems," said Gordon. "We started by automating about 300 listings per day and now, some days we process over 10,000."

This past summer, RealPlus launched R.L.X. 2.0, which offers enhanced features, including redundant, highly available servers, hosting, automated fail-over, RETS, etc. While its predecessor, now called R.L.X. 1.0, will continue to be offered at no charge, R.L.X. 2.0 comes at a modest monthly fee to support its increased functionality.

Gordon has also overseen the creation of an exclusive relationship with New York State MLS allowing RealPlus' clients to automatically feed their listings to REALTOR.com® - one of the nation's most heavily trafficked consumer real estate websites. So far, New York was not well represented on REALTOR.com®, because of the associated expenses.

"Through our relationship with New York State MLS, it is now not only possible to get listings to REALTOR.com®, but it's also extremely inexpensive to do so," said Gordon. "Agents can expose their sellers' apartments to potential buyers who were previously unable to see them unless they came to local listings portals."

While these developments seemingly occur under the radar, they have a huge impact on the industry - as was demonstrated by the extraordinary public reaction to R.L.X., RealPlus Map, AllAccessNYC (a VOW product), and the recently released 100% web-based listings manager and CRM, Jaguar.

"Our goal is to become the one-stop-shop for all New York-based residential firms," said Gordon. "Our hope is that we will be able to save our clients' time and money by offering them everything they need to successfully compete in today and tomorrow's local and national markets."