

# Niche Disruption: HIA® Canada's Journey to Not "Change the World"

BY ANKUR DESAI

Home Investment Advisors (HIA®) Canada is “not here to change the world, just the real estate industry.” Their niche disruption comes from a unique product called RealOffice360™, a cloud-based customer relationship management software that provides real estate agents with a platform to add customer value after the transaction is complete.

HIA® started when founder and CEO Guy Mitchell, wanting his daughter to succeed in real estate, decided to create and implement a new business model for the industry.

Mitchell, acknowledging that a person's home is often their most valuable asset, created a service that allows people to manage their property as an investment. The initial service bridged the gap between homeowners, their property and information on their property such as current personal property values and ongoing community market sales trends with real estate agents outside the point of sale.

After tracking user engagement and feedback during beta testing with 60 agents and 600 homeowners, the team pivoted the service to a client management product for agents to use in conjunction with the value add service for clients.

Mike McAra, COO, explains that they did not fully abandon their service, rather incorporated it into their newly-launched product: RealOffice360™. “While the service, philosophy and core ideology was sound, we found real estate agents were extremely busy dealing with active clients and active situations day to day that they didn't regularly get a chance to engage with their clients on an ongoing basis.”

Now agents can use RealOffice360™ to visualize and manage their business in one place while integrating all of their client's information across a suite of internal apps, and additionally augment the special HIA® service to their clients through a secure digital platform.

Recently HIA® was one of 10 companies accepted into the Canadian Digital Media Network's 2018 Get There



program, allowing them to travel to Silicon Valley with other Canadian startups. McAra sees getting into such programs as validation for their hard work.

Get There allowed them to observe the innovation ecosystem in Silicon Valley and bring those learnings back to Calgary. It also expanded their network and connected them to various strategic advisers in the valley who provided valuable information for their company's growth.

“Whether we action all of it or not is up for debate. But we were able to draw upon that wealth of knowledge, which allows us to facilitate our goals,” says McAra.

This includes moving their product beyond Calgary. After launching RealOffice360™ at the Calgary Real Estate Board Forecast in January, HIA® is confident in moving their product into new markets such as Edmonton, Vancouver and the United States. “We have a product that has the ability to go continent wide so now it's strategically selecting where our markets are and where we go first,” says McAra.

Learn more about RealOffice360™ at [realoffice360.com](http://realoffice360.com). To learn more about Calgary Technologies Inc. and how it's accelerating Calgary's innovation-driven ventures, visit [calgarytechnologies.com](http://calgarytechnologies.com). **B**

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