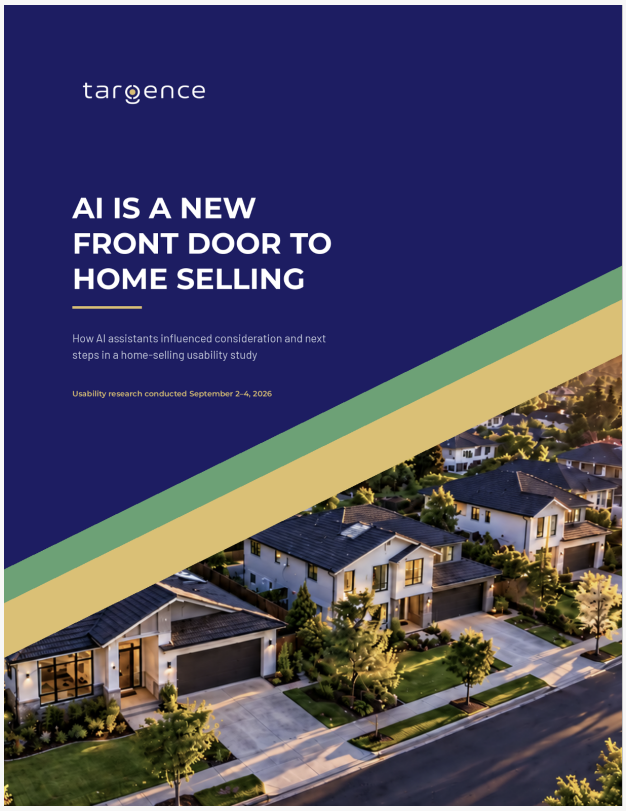
Targence Study Reveals AI Shapes Home Seller Decisions While Marketing Attribution Fails to Track Impacts

Usability research shows US sellers act on AI recommendations without clicking source links, leading real estate companies to misallocate marketing budgets.



Targence Home Selling Usability Report Sept 2026

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Targence, an AI Perception Intelligence company, today released findings from a home-selling usability study showing how AI assistants are becoming a new front door to home selling: shaping which agents and services sellers consider, the criteria they judge them by and the questions they ask, often before any website receives a visit.

In video-recorded, task-based sessions via Userbrain, participants began a home-selling scenario with an AI assistant and were observed thinking aloud as they compared selling routes, narrowed local agent options and prepared questions for prospective providers. Participants consistently described AI as strongly influencing what they considered or would do next, and frequently described taking steps they would not otherwise have taken without AI's recommendation.

Yet not a single participant clicked a citation link in an AI answer to check a source. Some scanned the AI response only, some found the links hard to notice, and some felt no need to look further. As one theme from the sessions put it: why click, when you already have the answer?

The influence began even earlier than the shortlist. Before any business was named, AI was already steering the decision path: which route to sell (agent, cash offer, or fix things up first), the criteria home sellers used to compare agents (ratings, sales history, local experience) and the

questions they planned to bring into the conversation (net proceeds, fees, process).

“The quieter risk is not lost credit, it is misallocated budget,” said Asaf Ashkenazi, co-founder and CEO of Targence. “Sellers acted on AI’s answer without ever clicking a source, so that influence never reaches your reports. Leaders read clean numbers, conclude AI is not yet material to the business, and keep funding the channels the report can see. Real estate businesses need to do the opposite: find out what AI tells home sellers about them and why, then take steps to influence the answer.”

What happened after the AI answer is where measurement breaks down. Participants searched Google to locate an agent AI had suggested, verified reviews of businesses AI had shortlisted, opened a recommended person’s profile, or asked AI for phone numbers to call. Participants said they have stopped searching the way they used to, starting with AI first and using Google for validation rather than initial discovery. AI shaped the choice; other channels got the credit.

“That was the only way I found them,” said a participant who asked AI to narrow local agent options and provide their phone numbers, then planned to call and compare the agents.

The sessions also showed how AI changes what a website has to do. Visitors can arrive already knowing whom they want to investigate, seeking proof, reassurance and a clear next step rather than an introduction to the category. One participant wanted to speak with a person before signing up for a home-selling service and struggled to find a contact route. Targence’s recommendation: serve both arrival states, and make credible evidence and a way to reach a human easy to find for visitors arriving after AI-assisted research.

Drawing on the research and its work with leading AI systems, Targence recommends that real estate marketers take three steps:

1. Find out what AI says when sellers ask, and why it says it.
2. Surface your expertise and make it verifiable, so the evidence AI and prospects check holds up.
3. Close the gaps in the evidence AI relies on, before a competitor’s story becomes the default answer.

The full research report and usability testing methodology is available at: https://targence.substack.com.

About Targence

Targence is the AI Perception Intelligence Company. Its proprietary technology reveals how leading AI systems understand, compare, trust, and recommend a business, uncovers the evidence shaping those conclusions, and identifies the actions needed to influence them. Targence combines tailored AI investigation, inspectable evidence, and senior business expertise to expose perception gaps, competitive disadvantages, and hidden barriers to demand. It then turns those findings into prioritized actions that help leaders decide what to fix, prove, and

strengthen across marketing, communications, product, and strategy. Headquartered in San Diego, Targence helps organizations see what AI sees — and shape what buyers believe. Visit www.targence.ai.

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