

Lessons From The Frontline: What Developers Need From Proptech Today

By Murali Malayappan, Chairman & Managing Director, Shriram Properties Ltd.



The Indian real estate sector stands at a decisive juncture. With urbanization accelerating, aspirations rising, and homebuyers demanding greater transparency and convenience, technology is no longer optional — it is indispensable. Over the last few years, Proptech has emerged as a dynamic force, promising to transform how we plan, build, sell, and service homes. Yet, from the frontline of real estate development, I can say with certainty: the true potential of Proptech is still unfolding.

For Proptech founders, investors, and fellow CXOs, the critical question is not whether technology matters — it is where and how it can solve the most pressing challenges in the developer's journey. Based on my experience, I see four areas where Proptech can deliver transformative value today.

1. Solving Real Pain Points, Not Peripheral Ones

Developers operate in a business where timelines, costs, and customer trust are everything. The most urgent gaps are not glamorous, but solving them can change the industry.

Approvals and Compliance: Delays in approvals and compliance remain one of the biggest drags on project timelines. Proptech solutions that simplify documentation, automate compliance workflows, and provide real-time visibility to stakeholders can compress timelines dramatically.

Sales and Customer Experience: Today's homebuyers expect a seamless, digital-first experience. Virtual walkthroughs, AI-powered sales funnels, and omni-channel CRM integrations are no longer differentiators — they

are becoming hygiene factors. The opportunity lies in connecting these tools end-to-end so that sales, finance, and customer service teams operate on a single, intelligent platform.

Construction Efficiency: With rising input costs, improving project execution is non-negotiable. Drones for site monitoring, IoT-enabled sensors for quality control, and predictive analytics for procurement can reduce overruns and increase accountability.

Proptech that addresses these areas will find ready adoption because they touch the core of a developer's P&L.

2. Fit Matters More Than Features

One common misstep I see among Proptech founders is designing solutions in isolation. Too often, startups arrive with impressive features but little understanding of how real estate businesses actually run. A developer doesn't need the most sophisticated product in theory, we need tools that integrate smoothly into existing systems and workflows.

A practical example: a sales team cannot afford to toggle between five different apps to serve one customer. They need one streamlined interface that speaks to their CRM, payment gateway, and documentation process. Similarly, CFOs will only back technology that clearly demonstrates cost savings or faster revenue recognition.

The lesson here is simple: fit matters more than features. Proptechs must spend more time in the field understanding the rhythm of construction sites, the bottlenecks in sales offices, and the anxieties of customers — and then tailor their solutions accordingly. The startups that thrive will be those who co-create with developers, not just sell to them.

3. Partnerships Will Define the Next 3–5 Years

The future of Proptech is not about startups versus large developers; it is about partnerships that leverage the strengths of both. Developers bring scale, capital, and deep understanding of customer behavior. Startups bring agility, innovation, and fresh thinking.

Over the next 3–5 years, I foresee more joint pilots, revenue-sharing models, and even equity

partnerships between developers and Proptech firms. For developers, this is not just about adopting tools — it is about shaping them. For Proptechs, this is not just about selling products — it is about embedding into the very DNA of how real estate operates.

At Shriram Properties, we have already experienced the benefits of such collaborations. By working closely with technology partners, we have enhanced customer journeys, accelerated decision-making, and created scalable models for future projects. The opportunities are immense if both sides are willing to invest in trust and long-term alignment.

4. Advice for Proptech Founders: Think Scale, Think India

If I had to leave one message for Proptech entrepreneurs, it would be this: **design for scale in India.**

Our market is vast, diverse, and cost-sensitive. A solution that works in a niche segment but fails to adapt to mid-market housing — where the bulk of India's growth lies — will remain limited in impact. Founders must ask themselves: *Can this solution be adopted across multiple cities, price points, and customer profiles? Can it reduce complexity for both the developer and the end user?*

The winners will be those who balance cutting-edge innovation with the frugality, simplicity, and adaptability that India demands.

Proptech is not just about digitizing processes; it is about reimagining the real estate value chain for a new era. For developers, the need is clear: we seek partners who can solve real pain points, integrate seamlessly into our workflows, and scale with us as we grow.

The next wave of Proptech will not be led by flashy features, but by practical, purpose-driven solutions built in close collaboration with developers. When that alignment happens, technology will not just support real estate — it will redefine it.

"ONE COMMON MISSTEP I SEE AMONG PROPTech FOUNDERS IS DESIGNING SOLUTIONS IN ISOLATION."