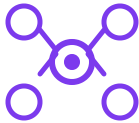# Entity Resolution for CRE

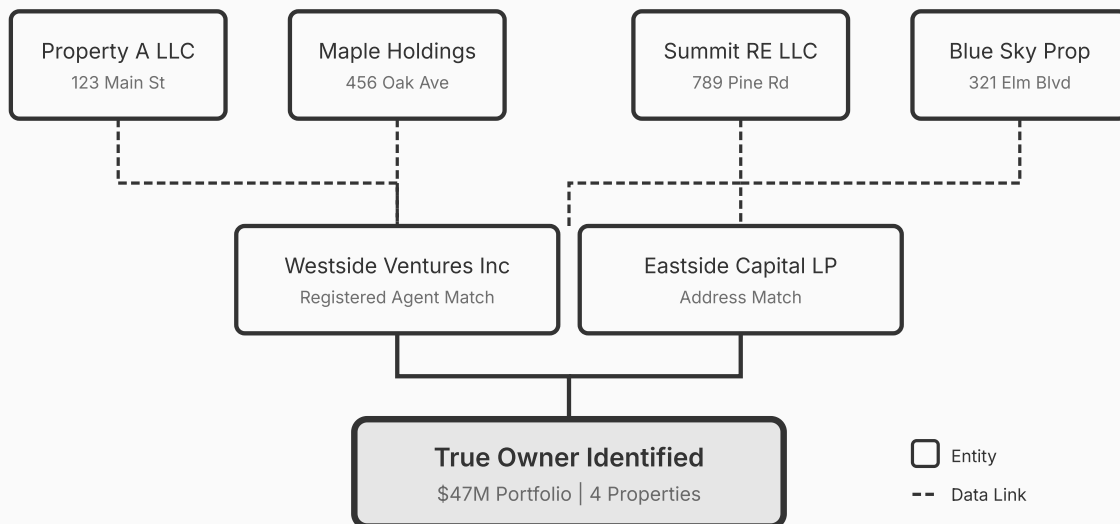Connect the Dots Across Your Deal Data

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1.69M

Records Processed

Entity resolution systems can process 1.69 million records to identify hidden connections.

LLC Entity Tracing Flowchart

Property A LLC	Maple Holdings		Summit RE LLC	Blue Sky Prop
123 Main St	456 Oak Ave		789 Pine Rd	321 Elm Blvd

Westside Ventures Inc
Registered Agent Match

Eastside Capital LP
Address Match

True Owner Identified
$47M Portfolio | 4 Properties

☐ Entity
-- - Data Link

That strip mall you want to buy? The deed says "Sunshine Properties LLC." The LLC's registered agent is a lawyer in Delaware. The lawyer represents 400 other LLCs. And somewhere behind all that paperwork sits an actual person who can say yes to your offer.

Finding that person is the difference between closing deals and chasing ghosts.

Commercial real estate runs on relationships. But building relationships requires knowing who you're actually dealing with. When 73% of commercial properties are held through LLCs, trusts, and corporate structures, the ownership question isn't trivial. It's the foundation of every acquisition strategy.

The LLC Problem Nobody Talks About

Here's what your property database doesn't tell you: that "unique owner" count is fiction.

We recently cleaned 1.69 million ownership records for a national investment firm. What we found was chaos dressed up as data. The same person appeared under 47 different variations of their name. Different people shared identical tax ID numbers due to data entry errors. One owner controlled 340 properties through LLCs that appeared completely unrelated.

The final count? 1.25 million unique owners. Nearly half a million "owners" in the original data were duplicates, errors, or phantom entities.

> *Your database isn't telling you who owns what. It's telling you what names appear on documents.*

This matters because every duplicate wastes time. Your team calls the same person twice through different LLCs. You bid against yourself on portfolio deals. You miss the pattern that would reveal a motivated seller across multiple properties.

Why Traditional Methods Fall Short

Most teams attack this problem with manual research. An analyst pulls property records, searches the Secretary of State database, cross-references with LinkedIn, makes some phone calls. For a single property, this works. Takes about two hours.

Now multiply that by 10,000 properties in your target market.

At two hours per property, you're looking at 20,000 hours of research. That's 10 full-time employees working an entire year on nothing but ownership research. The math doesn't work.

So teams cut corners. They research the top 100 properties and hope the rest aren't worth pursuing. They rely on incomplete data. They miss deals because they never found the right contact.

The alternative isn't better technology for manual research. It's eliminating manual research entirely.

How Entity Resolution Actually Works

Entity resolution sounds technical. The concept is simple: figure out when two records refer to the same real-world thing.

"John Smith" and "J. Smith" might be the same person. Or they might be father and son. "ABC Holdings LLC" might be the same entity as "ABC Holdings" or a completely different company that happens to share a name.

The process breaks into four stages:

- **Standardization:** Clean up variations in formatting. "123 Main Street" and "123 Main St" become identical. "JOHN SMITH" and "john smith" merge into the same format.

- **Blocking:** Group records that might match. No point comparing a property in Miami to one in Seattle when looking for common ownership.

- **Matching:** Score the likelihood that two records represent the same entity. Names, addresses, phone numbers, associated entities all contribute to the score.

- **Clustering:** Group all records that refer to the same real-world entity into a single profile.

Each stage requires careful calibration. Too aggressive, and you merge records that shouldn't connect. Too conservative, and you miss obvious matches.

The LLC Chain Problem

Ownership chains add another layer. That Sunshine Properties LLC might be owned by another LLC. Which is owned by a trust. Which is managed by a family office. Which is controlled by someone you could actually call.

Tracing these chains requires connecting multiple data sources:

- Secretary of State filings (articles of organization, annual reports)

- Property records (deeds, mortgages, tax records)

- UCC filings (which often reveal lender relationships and corporate connections)

- Court records (litigation sometimes exposes beneficial owners)

- Business registrations across multiple states

Each source uses different identifiers. A person might file as "Robert Johnson" with one state and "Bob Johnson" with another. The matching problem compounds at every level of the ownership chain.

What Changes When You Solve This

The investment firm that cleaned 1.69 million records? Here's what happened next.

They discovered one family controlled 89 properties across 12 states through 67 different LLCs. None of those properties had been identified as connected. A single relationship unlocked a potential portfolio acquisition worth $340 million.

They found 3,400 properties where the listed owner had died, triggering potential estate sales. Their database showed these properties as held by active LLCs. The reality was motivated sellers who needed to liquidate.

They identified 12 property managers who controlled acquisition decisions for institutional owners. Instead of pitching 12,000 properties individually, they built relationships with 12 people.

The same data told a completely different story once the ownership was untangled.

Building Your Own Entity Resolution Capability

You don't need to clean 1.69 million records to benefit from entity resolution. Start with your existing pipeline.

Pull every property you've researched in the past year. Export the ownership data. Run basic standardization on names and addresses. Look for obvious duplicates.

Most teams find 15-25% duplication in their own research. That's time already wasted.

Next, pick a target market. Pull every commercial property record. Before doing any outreach, run entity resolution across the ownership data. Group properties by true owner, not listed entity.

This changes your approach from "call 10,000 LLC registered agents" to "build relationships with 3,000 actual decision-makers." Same market. Same properties. Dramatically different strategy.

The Technology Question

Can you do this in Excel? For a few hundred records, yes. For thousands, you'll need purpose-built tools.

The good news: you don't need to build anything. Modern entity resolution platforms handle the matching algorithms, the data cleaning, the chain tracing. What used to require a team of data scientists now runs through a web interface.

We processed those 1.69 million records in 14 hours. Total cost was less than $12,000. The equivalent manual effort would have exceeded $1.5 million in labor costs. That's 125x cheaper, and more accurate.

Accuracy matters because false matches create problems. Merging two unrelated "John Smiths" means wasted outreach and potential embarrassment. Missing a match between "ABC Holdings" and "ABC Holdings LLC" means missed opportunities.

Machine matching achieves 94-97% accuracy on clean data. Human review of edge cases pushes that to 99%+. Pure manual research typically runs 85-90% accurate because humans get tired, skip steps, and make transcription errors.

From Ownership to Contact

Knowing who owns a property is step one. Getting their contact information is step two.

Once you've identified the true owner, contact discovery becomes straightforward. You're searching for a specific person, not a maze of corporate structures. LinkedIn, email databases, phone number services all work better when you know exactly who you're looking for.

The hard part was figuring out that "Sunshine Properties LLC" is actually controlled by Robert Chen, who also owns properties through "Pacific Growth Partners" and "Chen Family Trust." Once you know that, finding Robert Chen's email is a five-minute task.

What This Means for Your Deal Flow

Most acquisition teams operate with incomplete information. They know what's listed on public records. They don't know who actually controls decisions.

Entity resolution closes that gap. It turns a property database into an owner database. It reveals relationships that enable portfolio conversations. It identifies the 5% of owners who control 40% of properties worth pursuing.

The firms winning competitive deals aren't smarter. They're not working harder. They simply know who to call while everyone else is still researching LLC registrations.

That's the difference between chasing 10,000 entities and building relationships with the people who matter.

Ready to untangle your ownership data? Talk to our team about entity resolution for commercial real estate, or explore more CRE data solutions.