

WebCE Weekly Wrap-Up: May 9, 2025

By WebCE Staff

May 9, 2025



This week's top stories blend serious economic signals with some lighter moments in marketing. Fed Chair Jerome Powell ruled out preemptive rate cuts, reinforcing a cautious stance amid ongoing inflation concerns, while graduate accounting programs across the U.S. saw a surge in applications—an encouraging sign for the profession’s future pipeline.

We also look at what sets top-performing funeral homes apart in a challenging market, examine the sharp rise in phishing attacks threatening organizational security, and wrap things up with a playful new campaign from Reba McEntire, who brings her Southern charm to a sitcom-style Realtor.com ad that’s turning heads and winning smiles.

Let's dive in.

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Top Stories of the Week

1.
Fed meeting recap: Powell rules out a preemptive rate cut to blunt any tariff impact (*CNBC*)

Fed Chair Jerome Powell knocked down any notion of taking preemptive rate cuts as inflation is still running above target. “It’s not a situation where we can be preemptive, because we actually don’t know what the right responses to the data will be until we see more data,” Powell said.

2.
FINRA Seeks to Ease Worries on Outside Business Activities Plan (*Think Advisor*)

The new plan "significantly reduces reporting obligations that have been in existence for decades," FINRA said in its statement. "FINRA is proposing to reduce these obligations to help broker-dealers focus on investment-related outside activities that present higher risks to investors and firms."

Read FINRA's statement here.

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3.
IRS and Federal Government Will Stop Accepting Paper Checks as Payments (*CPA Practice Advisor*)

“Starting Sept. 30, the secretary of the Treasury is ordered to cease issuing paper checks for all federal disbursements and will no longer accept paper checks as payment. The order is inclusive of intragovernmental payments, benefits payments, vendor payments, and tax refunds.”

4.
Graduate school applications in accounting enjoy a banner year (*Journal of Accountancy*)

“A historic percentage of graduate accounting programs in the United States reported a rise in student applications last year, based on new research. Nearly three-fourths of master’s in accounting programs enjoyed an increase in applications in 2024, according to data collected by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) for its annual Application Trends Survey.”

5.
NAR Report Reveals Home Staging Boosts Sale Prices and Reduces Time on Market (*Realty Times*)

“Nearly three out of 10 (29%) real estate agents reported that staging their sellers’ homes led to a 1% to 10% increase in the dollar value offered, and almost half (49%) of home sellers’ agents observed that home staging reduced the time homes spent on the market, according to the National Association of Realtors® 2025 Profile of Home Staging.”

6. **Insights from Top-Performing Funeral Homes** *(American Funeral Director)*

Why are some funeral homes thriving in today’s climate while so many are struggling? Learn from 11 highly rated funeral homes to discover the secret to their successes.

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7. **How AI Can Unlock Hybrid Creativity in the Workplace** *(Knowledge at Wharton)*

“Cultivating this fertile ground, however, demands more than simply deploying AI tools. It requires a holistic understanding of self and society and a deep appreciation for the how, why, and what of AI. To curate hybrid creativity systematically, businesses should invest in two aspects of their internal culture: environment and education.”

8. **Phishing Attacks Surged in Q1 2025** *(KnowB4)*

“Vishing was the most common type of phishing attack seen, accounting for over 60 percent of all phishing engagements, though we also observed malicious attachments, malicious links, and business email compromise (BEC) attacks. Adversaries predominately leveraged phishing to gain access to a valid account, pivot deeper into the targeted network, and expand their foothold, contrasting other phishing objectives we have seen in the past such as eliciting sensitive information or monetary transfers.”

9. **Preventing Burnout in the Security Industry** *(Security Magazine)*

“Boston Consulting Group found there are four main factors that make people feel included at work: access to resources, managerial support, psychological safety, and equal opportunities for success.”

10. **The 8 security metrics that matter most** *(CSO)*

“When it comes to deploying cybersecurity KPIs and metrics, it’s easy to get bogged down in a seemingly endless number of popular insights and indicators. Fortunately, just a handful stand out from the pack as essential for any cybersecurity strategy. Here are some of the best.”

Top Podcast of the Week

How to Fix Dysfunctional Team Dynamics

Harvard Business Review On Leadership

33 Minutes

Is your teamwork not working?

In this episode of HBR’s advice podcast, *Dear HBR*®, cohosts Alison Beard and Dan McGinn answer audience questions with the help of Amy Edmondson, a professor at Harvard Business School and the author of *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*. They talk through what to do when your team isn’t communicating, doesn’t respect its leader, or has one employee who’s causing problems.

Key episode topics include: managing teams, managing difficult people, managing conflict, team dysfunction, organizational culture, communication styles, feedback, trust, employee performance management, leadership styles, leadership

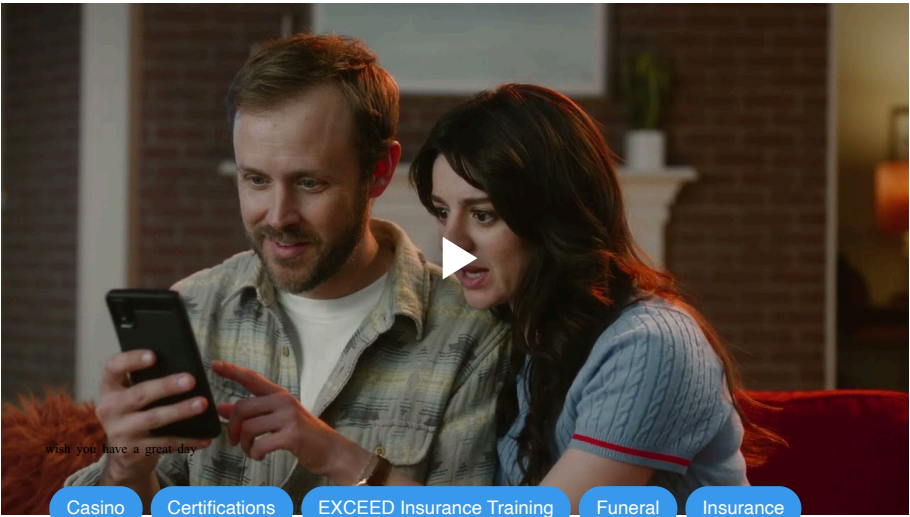
Weekend Wind-Down

Reba McEntire Partners with Realtor.com

From country music stardom to dominating prime time, Reba McEntire now brings her Southern charm to Realtor.com as its newest brand ambassador.

The campaign stars McEntire, 70, in a fictional sitcom called **Nearly Home**, and the first few short ads launched this week.

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