

Top 10 Tips for Developing Your Website



For the past few years, many real estate agents believed in the theory that simply having a website was “good enough” in establishing an online presence. That may have been true then, but now standards have changed. With more competition, real estate agents need to ensure that their website is not generating only one quality lead per year, but contending with a competitor’s website who might be closing more like 10 online customers per month.

Proven successful by fellow real estate agents, these top 10 strategies will help you create a more effective real estate website—and achieve that online profit center you envisioned when your site was originally created.

1 Drive people to your site

Is your website worth anything if no one actually views it? Your website URL should be on every piece of marketing material you have, including yard signs, flyers, and business cards. Tell everyone you know about your site, too, because word-of-mouth marketing can be very powerful. Other strategies include purchasing keywords, banner ads and using keywords to take advantage of search results.

2 Avoid the crash landing

When people come to your home page, what do they see? Because consumers immediately establish an idea of what the rest of their experience will be on your website from your home page, keep it clean and only highlight what you really want them to “do” or “see” on your site. If the information they encounter is irrelevant or overbearing, chances are that your valued consumer will abandon reading anything else on your site.

3 Content is king

Useful and accessible content separates a good real estate page from a bad one. Think local. Ideas such as neighborhood, school or community reports will give visitors access to valuable information, and reinforces your image as a local expert. How you present this information is critical because if consumers cannot find your information, how can they read it?

4 Make them register

Before giving your visitors free access to your listings, make them sign in with your site first. You may think that you might scare away customers, but since you can’t convert everyone, you will be able to collect the most qualified and serious visitors. Even the most successful real estate websites convert only 15-20% of visitors. A simple, yet effective registration form usually requires a name and email address, with an optional phone number.

5 See things from the consumer's perspective

When building your site, remember that you are building your website for potential clients, not for you. Avoid real estate professional abbreviations and acronyms whenever possible, even though you know what they mean, chances are your customer does not. Examples include using: “Listing Access” instead of MLS, “Close of Escrow” instead of COE, and “Days on Market” instead of DOM.

6 Be user-friendly to everyone

Although you may have a high-speed cable modem powering your Internet access, it does not mean your customer has it also. Try to avoid big flash animations, streaming video, or numerous pictures on your site because each could add several seconds to the time it takes your page to load.

7 Don't forget your camera!

Any time you post a listing on your website, include multiple photographs of the property. The National Association of Realtors® reports that homes with at least six photographs are viewed six times more often than homes without photographs. Also, most listings search engines will often default homes with multiple photos or virtual tours to the top of the search results page.

8 Put others to work for you

Instead of using your website as a self-promotion tool to show off awards, degrees, certification and achievements, try to have at least one testimonial from a previously satisfied client per page so that your consumers know you have helped other customers in similar situations. Testimonials have proven to be more effective tools in convincing new customers of your worth. To add validity to your testimonial, include a photograph of you helping your past clients (e.g. dropping of keys to their new house).

9 Don't link yourself out of business

It's tempting to fill your website with links as you try to provide more resources of information for your visitors, such as local schools, municipalities, even local shopping or dining. These are great resources but they all lead away from your site! Remember, you worked hard to get your visitor to come to your website and if you are going to give them a reason and path to leave, try to frame your page so that they are always looking at your page.

10 It pays to be flexible

Like a yoga instructor, your website's success will depend on how flexible it is. Online marketing works the same as offline marketing – you market yourself, track the results and make the necessary changes. If you are not having success with visitors landing on one page, try another page that has a different incentive offer. If visitors are not staying on your front page as long as you would like, change the format to something new. Websites are designed to be easily and frequently updated.

Good luck with your website!

Matt Malmgren is the Client Services and Training Manager for HomeGain. He has trained thousands of agents nationwide on how to be more successful when working with online leads and how to build a successful web presence. Visit www.homegain.com for more information.