

Internet Lead Generation

For The Real Estate Professional



*By Josh Harley
and Eleanor Thorne*

Introduction

This is for all the agents who have been told that they "have to" **BUY** into Social Media... but were never taught HOW to do it... or more importantly, WHY they should spend time and money on it.

Knowing who your Community is will make generating leads so much easier!

"Your Community" is just the new catch phrase for Target Audience. Who are you trying to Generate Leads from? Most Real Estate Agents we talk to answer that question with "Anybody who can Buy or Sell a House!" But the reality is that the most **SUCCESSFUL** Real Estate Practices are built on a business plan that has at its' core a target market strategy.

This is NOT some new idea for the Digital Movement – but it certainly makes all of your work pay off faster if you know **WHO** you are trying to connect to, and where they can be found!

Where are you Farming?

A community is simply a group of people with a common interest. You can have a community grow around a hobby, a movement, a profession, an American Idol Contestant and so many others. The days where communities were purely based around geographical factors have given way to online communities where the bond is whatever people want to make it.

Does that mean that Geographic Farms are an "old" idea? Absolutely not! There are agents in Major Metropolitan areas who built their entire Real Estate Business around 1 City Block and everything that happens on that block, including the Daily

Special at the Deli on the Corner, and when the new shipment of Sun Flowers will arrive at the florist... and the couple that's moving out of the 5th floor Unit because they are expecting another baby and need more space!

Knowing who you want to connect with, and therefore who your audience is becomes critical in your networking and lead generation success.

Don't Miss a Huge Opportunity! Connect with other Agents!

If you went to a National Convention – would you be looking for Real Estate Agents who could refer leads to you? Of course you would! [Leaving comments](#), connecting to Real Estate Agents on Twitter, Activerain, Facebook and LinkedIn is good for business. You never know who will know someone in your area who needs to list or buy a home – and when they do – you want them to call YOU, right?

What about TARGETING agents in those areas that buyers and sellers actively relocate to and from? [Look at this map](#), if I was an Agent in Dallas County, Texas – I would be connecting and looking for friends in King County Washington (for instance) or maybe Jefferson Parish, La.

Be part of the National Real Estate Community through the Designations that you have! You can generate leads through CRS, ePro, ABR – virtually all of your Designations that you've spent so much time (and money) attaining! This is a great Community that you could be a visible leader in!

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Chapter 1:

Lead Generation in Social Media

Social Media is a huge and wonderful tool – made even more special by the fact that it's F-R-E-E.

Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue... and that DIALOGUE is what generates Real Estate LEADS!

What's included in that term "Social Media"? Well, for most of us it's Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, FourSquare, Google+, Gowilla, Blogs, Posterous or Tumblr.

In Real Estate World at least 30% of the people we talk to are NOT on Facebook yet. And if they ARE, at least 80% of them do not have a blog. And if they ARE in the minority of people who have a blog, many of them are not getting any Social Interaction, or traction with that Blog (which is really a shame).

Real Estate Agents, for the most part, need to quit looking at Social Media as just another place to Advertise, and start seeing it as a place to Dialog. Social Media is really a tool for Social Networking, which develops into Real Estate Leads.



Advertising, where you say how great you are, is out.
Viral marketing, where someone else says how great you are, is in .

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Advertising, by definition is the paid, public, non-personal announcement of a persuasive message by an identified sponsor to its existing and potential customers. It's the Old Fashioned Reader Ad, or Print Ad in the Newspaper... Advertising is not getting much attention now that everyone is carrying around a smart phone and iPad!

Most people happily share their favorite restaurants, the places to get the best deals online, and oftentimes, the name of the Realtor who did a good job for them on their transaction. THAT is what people refer to as Viral Marketing... getting people to talk about you! Getting people to forward a link to something you wrote, or ReTweeting (or repeating) something that is important.

The old model for real estate marketing was to rely heavily on advertising in newspapers, in the Real Estate Book or maybe through radio. There is no interaction and no way to really track how many people saw your newspaper ad or heard your radio commercial. Today Sellers expect to see a "Hit" report on the property!

Real Estate Agents who understand MARKETING, and how it differs from straight ADVERTISING will be the ones who understand that [Social Media is a Cocktail Party](#) ... it's about the Conversation, not the AD.

The New Trend? "Go where people ARE" as opposed to the old model of "How can I get them to come to me". There's a big difference in having a site that answers questions people are asking, and is found with great information when people want to know more about your area... and just having a site with the exact same words and information 4,000 other agents in the country have.

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Just having a website doesn't mean you have a Web Presence. Just putting your listings on Twitter every 15 minutes doesn't make people want to see that house. Ditto when it comes to Facebook!

As a Real Estate Agent, you have to understand that Social Media is not for SPAM... and it's NOT a Waste of TIME!

Social Media is a great tool for Generating LEADS... often F-R-E-E leads! So let's explore how to use some of the most popular tools to do just that.

Chapter 2:

Facebook and Real Estate

Newsflash! Facebook isn't just for High School kids and College Kids anymore.

- **600 million** – People on Facebook at the end of 2010.
- **250 million** – New people on Facebook in 2010.
- **30 billion** – Pieces of content (links, notes, photos, etc.) shared on Facebook per month.

If you overlook the Angry Bird Games, and the Virtual Hearts and Virtual Farm references, Facebook is an amazing platform for marketing any business, especially real estate. With over 600 million active users, real estate agents are certain to be able to find new clients through the vast network of home buyers, sellers and investors that use Facebook.

Many of the people we talk to who are not “early adoptors” are concerned about the Security Issues with Facebook. While you should certainly be aware of the ever changing Security Changes on Facebook, and check your settings at least on a quarterly basis, this should NOT stop you from using it. You should understand that [Facebook gives you these Security Settings](#) so you can filter who sees what type of information.

Other people we speak with want to be certain they maintain a “Professional Image” on Facebook, and ask us if they should have a “Personal” page and a Professional page. The answer to that question is Yes... and NO.

You SHOULD have a “Personal PROFILE” on Facebook where you



can [put your classmates into lists](#), your family into a different list, your past clients in another... AND you should have a “Professional” PAGE which can be seen by Google, and anybody else looking for information on the topics you put on there! You should NOT have [2 PROFILES on Facebook](#) – it’s against the rules, it’s not transparent and Facebook could shut you off!

It is important to remember that everyone knows someone, who may know someone, who is interested in buying, selling or investing in real estate. The more authority, respect and credibility you are able to amass on Facebook (and other networks) the more likely someone else is to find you and refer someone they know to you.

The average Facebook user has less than 150 friends. While having a large network of friends and fans can most certainly be beneficial, you don’t need 2000 friends for Facebook to be useful for your Lead Generation.

You are building your Business by Design when you reach out to prospects on Facebook. “If the demographics of your limited friends and fans make up the exact target demographics you are looking for, or if they are key influencers in their online and offline communities, then fewer of these will be far more valuable than thousands of people you barely know.”

But if the thought of getting on Facebook and having your children, your high school classmates and “kinda” friends know what your having for dinner is un-appealing – join the crowd!

The One To Four Rule

With over 600 million people publishing information JUST TO FACEBOOK – it’s important to think about what you are “putting out there.” We advise Real Estate Agents to use the 1/4 Rule. For every time that you mention “Going to out with First Time Home

Buyers Today, “ Or “I just met with the nicest folks who hate that they are moving out of this lovely home in the Whipperwill Subdivision!” You should post 3 “other” status updates.

Let people get to know you, and the area that you are in. “To attract the right type of friends and fans to your Facebook Profile and Business page(s) you MUST publish interesting, relevant and useful content.” If your goal is to be the Golf Course Specialist... then putting information about GOLF would be logical. Links to interesting Golf articles and You Tube videos from famous swing instructors are wonderful... But, pictures of you at a Golf Tournament in the area are BETTER. The goal is to get people to engage with your content. If it’s not interesting, would YOU stick around waiting for more?

Just remember that Social Media (and Social Networking) is REALLY about a conversation. You can hold a conversation with people you “kinda know” right? *Sure you can...* and right now, if you want to make money in real estate sales, you simply MUST be on Facebook, having those online conversations in order to Generate Real Estate Leads!

Ethics You Should Discuss with Buyers and Sellers

It’s important to incorporate a discussion about Facebook into your “script” with Buyers and Sellers. Because everyone knows someone who might know someone... it is important for buyers to be cautious about posting a status update that says, “We just found our DREAM house at 123 Main Street! We’re going to offer them \$8000 less... but we would certainly go higher!”

Likewise, it doesn’t make sense for a Seller to go on Facebook and say, “We are getting desperate! We haven’t had a showing in 2 weeks and we have to move!” What if one of their friends has a friend who is an agent? What if one of their neighbor Facebook friends knows someone who is looking for a home in that area...

it's just not smart business!

A GREAT Idea is to have the Seller go onto your Business Page and leave a comment under the link to their home about what a great area it is. Social interaction with a Link, or information is given extra "points" by Google!

TIP: Facebook allows users to get more SEO friendly user names for their Facebook profiles and fan pages. Signing up for a user name makes the URL of your page or profile (1) more SEO friendly and (2) easier to remember for other users.

Remember that Facebook makes it almost IMPOSSIBLE to change your "Vanity Profile URL" and your "Custom Business Name / URL" so choose WISELY.

If you have a business page, you cannot get a user name unless you have at least 25 people who "Like" your page. So, get some great content on your Business page, let your friends know about it and then sign up for your own SEO friendly user name.

[Click here to setup your Facebook user name](#)

The Facebook Time Investment

Does it take concentrated effort to find people to connect with, upload pictures, set up your Security Settings, and come up with stuff to post on your Personal AND Business Facebook Account? Yes. You should be updating your Personal Profile Daily – twice a day is not unexpected. Your Business Page should be updated once or twice a day as well.

If you have a smart phone, [you can update your pages](#) from your phone!

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You will likely spend 15 to 20 minutes a day on Facebook. However, we are willing to guarantee that if you talk to anyone who has really invested their time and effort into making social connections online with Facebook, they will tell you that the return they are getting has been worth those few extra minutes a day spent online.



Chapter 3:

Twitter and Lead Generation

Twitter boasts 200 million accounts, and 95 million daily tweets. A recent survey of people under 25 showed that a staggering “80 per cent use a mobile device to communicate with friends while watching TV, with 72 per cent using Twitter, Facebook or mobile applications to actively comment on shows as they are watching them.”

What does that have to do with Real Estate Lead Generation? People are communicating more rapidly these days. Gen Y can text faster than they talk... they are asking and receiving the collective opinions of their friends ALL THE TIME. With Twitter – you can be part of those conversations and Generate Leads!

Granted, Twitter is a little trickier to understand... but if you fall into one of the extremely high demographics of folks who are using Twitter to communicate, or if you want to rank on Google (who now owns Twitter) you should probably take the time to figure it out.

BASICS

You only have 140 Characters to use for your update – so it’s a wonderful tool for people who are “Creative” Spellers. The person you are trying to make a comment to shows up the @ symbol in front of their name. So @Nik_Nik or @HarleyLtd. You Search for Information using the # sign. So if you wanted to be found or look for information in San Diego it would be #SanDiego. If you were commenting about Facebook it usually shows up as #FB. People RE-TWEET what others have put out there... that’s just like Repeating something. It usually looks like this RT@HarleyLtd



People follow other people, other topics and Trending Topics... You can also follow a phrase like "Looking For ____ San Diego"

And lastly, know that Twitter generally does not make sense if you are "looking at it" through TWITTER.Com ... to get Twitter, you need to look at it, monitor it, work with in using a different App like Hootsuite, Seesmic or Tweetdeck. Whichever app you use, you should down load that App to your smart phone because that's where you will be sending and updating many of your messages as you move around town.

Rules of Etiquette

- **Re-tweet comments of interest.** Why? The obvious reason is that you like the info and feel it is worth repeating. The not-so-obvious reason is that when you re-tweet it shows people you reciprocate. Others will start to re-tweet your posts. *The re-tweet is PARAMOUNT to your success on Twitter.* When you post something it goes to your 200 or so followers. What if five of those people re-tweeted it? And then another 10 re-tweeted it again? Your audience and potential leads grow exponentially ...
- **Respond to all mentions and messages.** See who has mentioned you and thank them -- every day! Respond to direct messages (DMs). Send a quick "thank you" DM to anyone who follows you (but do not send them a slimy spam message!)
- **Share your lifestyle - be personal, be real.** People want to connect with real PEOPLE

PAST THE BASICS – Generating Lead\$

As you read this, millions of people and potential clients are "tweeting". They are tweeting about everything. The overstressed single mother is tweeting about needing a massage, new

homeowners are tweeting about searching for a new home and the newlyweds are tweeting about their upcoming wedding. You might be asking yourself, why do I care about strangers tweeting?

Well, as a Real Estate Agent potential first time home buyers are great leads! Just like a spa Owner would be thankful to find people in your local area in need of some rest and relaxation! Monitoring, and joining the conversations is another way of farming!

[Create a Drip Campaign](#) that complements your target audience and the work you are doing on Facebook. Remember that just like an email campaign – you will not see immediate results, but [consistency will be critical](#).

With **this** Drip Marketing Campaign remember that people will connect to you because you let them know you are with clients, at a Chamber meeting, taking notes at the Chamber meeting and sharing them. Plan your tweets, and schedule out what you are going to say. Include links to Market Reports and Blog Posts that you write.

Look for Tweetups! Meeting people that you are connecting with online is a great way to generate leads! There are Tweetups (where you meet in Real Life often Spontaneously) and Twestivals all over the world! Several areas have annual Scavenger Hunts where people collectively give and receive clues through Twitter! Organize one of these events and connect with more people!

Remember that under your signature on all emails you should have your Twitter handle, and the words TXT or Call next to your phone number. You need to have your Twitter Handle “Public” in your profiles so that it can be SEEN on Facebook, on your Website, on your Blog Posts and your business cards. Bottom line... Wherever you have your phone number, add your Twitter handle!

Tip: A quick, easy, no pain way to grow followers is by setting up a paper.li Account for Twitter. [Paper.li](http://paper.li) will create a newspaper based upon the LINKS posted by the folks you are following on Twitter each day. If you are following many people who are writing about Golf (for instance) then a major feed for your newspaper will be Golf and Golf Courses. If you are following news and business in your area – then that will also be a focus. It's a great way to develop a Twitter strategy, as you consider what types of news you want to share and who are targeting! This is done every 24 hours, and there's nothing you need to do beside set it up!

Time Investment On Twitter

You can effectively run and manage a Twitter campaign in 10 to 20 minutes a day. Ideally you should be scheduling out some messages for the week, and it might take 30 or 45 minutes to do the messages for that week. Then daily you can quickly check-in via your phone a couple of times a day, and you should probably login every morning to see what folks are talking about, and again at the end of the day to be sure no one mentioned you and you didn't reply (similar concept to checking your voicemail or email messages periodically). Generating Leads takes some time – but it's well worth it!

Chapter 3:

LinkedIn for More Leads

Have you ever been to a Chamber of Commerce meeting where people shake your hand and at the same time give you their business card and ask for business before really getting to know you? If you're not careful, LinkedIn can feel that way. It's all about who you are connecting with, and what Groups and Conversations you are in.

LinkedIn is a great tool for expanding your Sphere of Influence, which is genuinely a form of Lead Generation. You can connect to people you went to school with, people from your Country Club or Church AND people you've met at Chamber Meetings. It's a way to professionally deepen your relationships and get to know someone better, see who you have common connections with. The more connections you have, the higher you will rank when someone searches your name.

We've known people who do a TON of business with the people they are connected to on LinkedIn. Most of those people have a very well defined Niche or Passion. They are WINE experts, and so they connect with people who are selling wine, collecting wine, growing vineyards, having wine tastings... or maybe they are CAR fanatics. One friend is a part of every Car Conversation that is going on – from how to run a small mechanics business to collecting roadsters, to NASCAR teams and the business of racing. *This is really how you let people know about your passions, and grow your Sphere.*

Complete your Profile! LinkedIn gives you a TON of space to put information about yourself. You can connect your blog and your



Website, connect your Status Updates to Twitter, highlight past achievements and your favorite books. You have the option of making your telephone number and email address public, and we would recommend that you do that so that people can contact you faster.

Give and receive recommendations on LinkedIn. Many agents are uncomfortable asking a past client to give them a Testimonial, even though they understand how important they can be for their business. Connect with those clients, give THEM a recommendation... *and then ask for one in return!*

You can update your status on LinkedIn, just like Facebook and Twitter – but it's important to remember the "tone" of business that is being done on this Social Media Channel. Finding Investors, posting information about the Real Estate Investment Market and connecting to those who are moving to your area (and are looking for a job) will likely be some of the best leads you will get from LinkedIn.

Tip: You can also post and promote events on LinkedIn. Depending upon the Geographic Area you are in, there are IRL (In Real Life) events of local LinkedIn groups, many of them meet every month. If you don't have these events going on in your area, start a group, and start meeting at a local coffee house!

Time Investment on LinkedIn varies depending upon your comfort level, who and how you are mining for leads. Best practice is to login and contribute at least weekly to a conversation, add connections and make recommendations. This could be a 30 minute time commitment per week, or a 30 to 45 minute commitment each day.

Summing up Lead Generation and Social Media

Is it a little time consuming? Yes – but this is NOT a major time

commitment. As a practical example, let's consider **the case of "Newly Wed Wendy"**. Wendy is a recently engaged 30-year-old attorney in Cleveland. She and her fiancé, "Young Pro Pete," are both homeowners, and plan to sell their homes and move to a new community that fits their interests and needs.

Pete bought his home nine years ago, and except for the annual refrigerator calendar magnet, and a random piece of mail here and there – he hasn't heard from his Realtor since.

Wendy, on the other hand, is friends with her Realtor (we'll call her "Connected Connie") on Facebook, and even subscribes to her Realtor's blog that features community news and real estate trends, and spotlights local businesses and events.

When Wendy shared pictures of her engagement on Facebook, Connie immediately knew Wendy's plans as a homeowner were about to change. Connie posted a congratulations message on Wendy's Facebook Wall, and sent her a greeting card with a personal note and her business card.

Whom do you think has the better chance to be the listing agent for both homes, and the trusted resource to help Pete and Wendy find their dream home?

Chapter 4:

Blogging and Content Creation

What is a Blog, anyway? If you have a website that you are paying a monthly subscription to – and it's got pages and pages of information that someone else wrote... chances are pretty good that it doesn't get very high search results on Google.

Search Engines are NOW programmed to look for **Unique, Relevant, Interesting, Useful** information. Creating your own Content (writing your own web pages) in a blog format is one way to deliver what the Search Engines want. The BLOG is not a BUTTON on your website. It is the Chronological pages (called posts) you are adding. It is similar to your "Email" stream. The oldest one is at the bottom, the most recent at the top.

You can (and should) divide your Chronological Posts into Categories or Topics. So a Category for First Time Homebuyers would hold all of the information you've written on that topic in Chronological order. A Category on Short Sales would hold that information. You can place these different Categories in different places on your site... and eventually your entire SITE becomes a Blog.

For the BEST placement, blogs should be updated with relevant material daily. If that is not possible, then start with 3 times a week. The key to all of this is that [Consistency is King!](#)

Blogs Get You On The First Page on Google?

Google especially looks for quality, timely content. Some of the SEO (Search Engine Optimization) gurus recently indicated that



"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." -Aristotle.

“shallow pages” with a paragraph of basic information that forces you to click to another page of information would NOT be considered “Quality” by the search engines.

Also, some of the recent SEO reports suggest that we all need to be vigilant about [creating inbound links](#) to our site, and we should have more social interaction with readers from our blog posts... especially if the blog is “seasoned.” Meaning that if you’ve been blogging for several years, and you don’t generally have many comments from readers, and you don’t ever have a “LIKE” (except maybe from YOU), then you might want to do some adjustments and make your site more SOCIAL.

Here’s the thing... I was fortunate to be featured at [RAINCAMP](#) in Dallas. They asked the panel I was on for basic, real estate blogging tips. I am a goal oriented, day planner addicted, numbers kinda’ guy. I don’t blog for my health... [I blog to generate leads...](#) and I generate a TON of leads.

Blog Platforms

There are Free, super simple places to Blog. One of the highest ranking sites is Blogger, which is owned by Google. One of the problems with Blogger is that it doesn’t give you options for design and hooking up to Search for Homes (through IDX). Another big complaint with Free sites is that you don’t OWN your content. This means if Google wants to make a change in the way that they do things – your content could be gone, or they could charge you for accessing it. While this is not likely to happen with Blogger – consider that when you look at the other free options.

Another free platform that appeals to some because you can upload to it from email and your mobile device is Posterous. Like Blogger, the content belongs to Posterous, you have more customization than Blogger – but it’s difficult (if not impossible) to incorporate Property Searches from Posterous.

Activerain, RealTown, eRealEstateSocial are all free, Real Estate blogging platforms. They essentially work the same, and offer a great place to learn, and connect with agents across the country. There's a social aspect to these platforms, and leaving comments on other blogs will actually ALSO help you with Google rankings.

Like Posterous and Blogger the downside to not having to pay anything means that it's not your content and you have a very limited ability to change any design or add a Property Search (IDX). Because the content is owned by Activerain (for instance) they can charge you to have the content published on the Web. The free Activerain account is for those who are satisfied with content only appearing to other agents who are logged into the account. **In addition to the 3 mentioned above another great Free platform is offered by Trulia in their Trulia Voices section.**

TIP: There's a relatively new blog platform just for [Short Sales](#). In addition to being a blog platform, there are answers to almost all of your short sale questions, including telephone numbers, addresses and contacts at the various banks across the country. This is an invaluable tool – and it's FREE to real estate agents willing to post information. You can use the site just to get answers... but you will benefit even MORE from the great exposure your blog posts will get!

WordPress.com VS. WordPress.org

WordPress is a software program that is free. If you have a [WordPress.com](#) site, then WordPress is Hosting that site, it's Free and because it's the largest blogging platform in the world you have great SEO. It comes with many different themes, and you can use plugins to make it do all kinds of fun tricks like connect to Twitter and Facebook, show your properties in a little rotating box, or pull in all of your photos on Flickr. The downside is that you don't own the content – and when there's a problem with a server, there's really nothing you can do about it.

If you opt for a WordPress.org site that means that you [purchase your domain name](#), you host your site, and you are using WordPress to make it look the way you want it to. Hosting your site can cost anywhere from \$6 to \$25 a month depending on who you decide to use and what type of options you might want. Because you are hosting the site, you own all of the content. There are thousands of Free themes and plug ins to choose from, and many that are real estate specific.

This might be a little daunting for the average Realtor to try and set up. It will take several hours, and that doesn't include the IDX feed. If you are going to self-host a WordPress site you should probably look at the Premium Themes that will cost you a one time fee of around a hundred bucks and come with tons of support.

Writing Effective Content

After you commit to writing a blog everyday, the question becomes, "How do you come up with content?"

I am a big believer in SEO (aka., search engine optimization) and writing with a purpose. **The purpose of writing content for your website should consist of one goal and one goal only... closing more deals and increasing your bottom line.** Why

else would you spend time writing when you could spend time on more effective income producing activities or, more importantly, spending more time with your family?



Am I suggesting that writing about personal issues on your real estate site is a waste of time? Not just no, but heck no! I see great value in showing your personal side in your blog. In fact, I'd highly suggest you also allow your personality to shine through when writing about real estate.

Be candid, personable and not only will your content read better, your readers will find it easier to relate to you.

The time you spend writing should meet the following objectives; increase your rankings within the search engines for the keywords that are relevant to your business... and provide true value while establishing a relationship between you and your readers.

So, how do I come up with content for my website or blog? I first look inward and determine where my business needs expanding and then I decide how my post can accomplish that task. For example, if I want to work with buyers looking for new construction homes, then I will write an article about a local builder and their neighborhoods. I will focus on the keywords that will drive those website visitors looking for more information on that builder to my article. I will then optimize the content and keywords in the article, and the headline, in an attempt to outrank that builder on their own name. If they are a small to medium size builder, that's a pretty easy task! Lastly, I ensure there is a value proposition. E.g., Fill out this form for a list on homes available for immediate move-in.

When you sit down to write your next blog post or page of content for your site, I want you to ask yourself the following questions:

- "How will this post help me capture a new client?"
- "Will this article be relevant to potential buyers or sellers?"

If the article is not specific to real estate, then ask, “Will this article build trust and increase my readership?”

Ultimately your blog should be a reflection of you and your goals. It should be used to increase your bottom line.

Optimizing your Content

Once you’ve written your content, Optimizing it and Syndicating it become critical factors so that it will be seen on the Web. This part can actually take as long as the writing of the post, and it is Equally as important!

Here are some additional, specific things you should know to maximize your Real Estate Blog:

- Make sure you have a “call to action” within the post or have some type of lead capture on the page. Afterall, if you drive traffic to your website without having a way to capture it as potential business then it’s like pouring water into a bucket full of holes.
- If you are writing content that is real estate related, pay attention to keywords to ensure your article will rank well for those keywords.
- When writing a blog post, make sure your keywords are in the [blog’s title](#) which should automatically show up in the page title.
- When writing a page of content for your site, make sure your keywords show up in the page title and also consider framing them in a “H1” tag which tells the search engine that these keywords are the main “thought” for that page.
- If possible, and without making the content look spammy, pay attention to “keyword density” by placing the keywords 2 to 4 times for every 100 words. Be consistent with the [keyword phrase](#)

(e.g., when using “Stonebridge Ranch homes”, don’t switch it up and use “homes in Stonebridge Ranch” as those are considered two different long-tail keywords).

- If you add a picture to the blog post or page, use the keyword for that image’s Alt tag and Title tag. This will help the search engine index the image for that keyword.
- Take advantage of the content you’ve just written to link to inner pages of your website. This will help some of your other pages you want to rank well. For example, if you are writing an article on new FHA guidelines, and happen to mention McKinney Real Estate, be sure to use the words “McKinney Real Estate” as the link text and link it to an inner page. Specifically one that you have already created to rank well for McKinney Real Estate. If you remain cognizant of this throughout your site, then you will help the search engines do a better job of indexing your site. If you haven’t been doing this and already have a lot of content, consider going back through your site and past articles to add these inner links.
- Don’t be afraid to link out to outside websites. If you are writing about a new IRS tax code, link the words “IRS tax code” back to the IRS.gov website on the exact page discussing those tax codes. Pointing your readers out to trusted “authority” websites is beneficial in your own rankings. One point of advice, use the target=”_blank” tag for the hyperlink to make sure the outside site opens in a new tab and does NOT drive them away from your site.
- Be personable, funny, candid, transparent, etc. If the reader can relate to you, they will be more likely to bookmark your site for future reading and more importantly, more likely to call on you when the time comes to buy, sell or refer a friend.

Duplicate Content is a problem – but posting information on your site, and then reposting it to ONE of the other Free Platforms with anchor text at the bottom stating “originally posted at” and linking to your site is fine. Placing the content on another site should be done after the Search Engine crawls your site. If you do this – it’s IMPORTANT to take the time to leave comments for other bloggers... because they will leave comments back. Social Interaction on a Blog post makes the post more “interesting” to the search engines.

Schedule Tweets about your post, put a link on your Facebook Business Page and Personal page with different messages to each Target Market. Again, it bears repeating that Social Interaction on a Blog post makes the post more “interesting” to the search engines.

Send out a [Free Press Release](#) about your Unique Topic. If there’s a new Subdivision, a Festival, Green Building code you are writing about do a Press Release!

Depending on your level of ambition, you can also place a link on a Social Bookmark site like Stumble Upon or Digg and invite friends to recommend it too.

Consider uploading images that you use to Flickr first, and then using the URL of the image in your post. Flickr offers you many more ways to optimize the picture. If you are doing a post on a certain neighborhood, you might have 39 pictures you can store on Flickr and 4 that you use in your blog post about that neighborhood. They should be “tied” together. (Plus Flickr is owned by Yahoo)

Go back to your Profile on places like Activerain and include links to your Blog Posts from that profile. Why not add a link to 5 Tips for First Time Home Buyers if that’s what you just wrote a post

on? [Here are a few more tips like this.](#)

If you are sending an email to a First Time Home Buyer have a link to the 5 Tips under your signature – they will click on THAT faster than www.lookatmygreatwebsite.com

Getting It All Done

Is your head spinning? This commitment to Generate Leads Online could require a change in your routine. It generally means you are going to get out of your comfort zone a bit... But it's important, and it DOES Generate Real Estate Leads!

You might be saying, "But I thought I was a Real Estate Agent? If I'm checking Twitter, finding things to put on Facebook, writing a BLOG POST everyday – when am I Selling Real Estate?" Great Question! There really IS a way to get this all done!

Let's break it down. The first thing to do is to get a plan, and create a system.

The Plan

I suggest starting a Spread Sheet that will become your lifeline. On the first page of the Spreadsheet, write down the top 6 or 7 topics you think someone Buying a Home in your areas should know, and the top 6 or 7 things a Seller in your area should know.

Then consider other areas in your business where you might like to get more closings from. For instance, if the New Home Builders in your area are paying a 4% commission rate – maybe you should concentrate some of your time on those builders and their neighborhoods. If that's the case, add the Builder and their neighborhoods to your List!

Once you write a blog post, put the URL, date and any important keywords (like the Geographic location) under that topic. Do this

every time you write a post. Later, when you have 88 posts, and you need to link to a post about that Builder (for instance) you will be able to easily find it!

Add to your list of Blog topics based upon your Calendar

Get out a Calendar and think about Festivals, Holiday Celebrations, the First Day of School, Tax Assessments and any other special events in your area. Now you can go back to your Spreadsheet and add a column for the MONTH – and know in advance what you want to write about during a given month. Keep writing from this Original List of topics, making sure that you have covered all of the topics in the original list before you add new topics.

TIP: Another great way to get ideas for Blog Posts is to read the questions consumers leave on Yahoo!, Zillow and Trulia. Do you find yourself answering the same question over and over? Write about it!

You are starting to have a PLAN! Having a plan, and knowing what you need to write about next saves a TON of time! PLUS... it's smart. Concentrating your efforts on specific Keywords will help your rankings.

TIP: I personally find that once I sit down to write, I write some REALLY long posts on the same topic that can be broken up into 3 or 4 “bite size” 250 to 300 word posts. You can SCHEDULE them to go out over a period of time. So you might do all of your writing for the week on Sunday afternoon, schedule those posts to go out and you won't have to write again for a whole week!

The System

Once you've created content, you need to Optimize it using the tools we discussed earlier. Just like you have a System (or Protocol) for each listing – you need a system for what to do each

time you create a blog post. Write that system down in a check list on the second page of your Spreadsheet! Remember to include scheduling out the status updates / messages and campaigns on Social Media Channels using your [TweetDeck](#), [HootSuite](#) or [Seesmic](#) account!

Summing Up Lead Generation and Blogging

A few weeks ago I was racing out of the office when I stopped by my desk to check my email. I can't tell you how excited I was to read the following:

"My husband and I are looking into buying our first house soon and have been searching for a real estate agent to guide us through the process. I've noticed through your blog that you are familiar with South Nashville and live in the general area we've been most interested in looking at, and we'd love your insight. Would you be able to meet up sometime and chat further? Thanks in advance."

Less than 10 days later, we had their first home under contract.

Chapter 5:

Pay Per Click (PPC)

Special Considerations When Creating Campaigns

For years Real Estate Agents spent money on ads in Newspapers, Relocation Guides, The Real Estate Book... but you could never really KNOW if it was producing any results! Very few people could track a lead directly from that print source.



When You Advertise on the Internet, it's called Pay Per Click or PPC.

“You only pay for advertising that is successful in driving a potential customer to view your material...” so your NOT paying for all of those times someone sees your name – only when they click on it.

With an Internet Advertising Campaign (PPC), your return on investment is much easier to track and measure. You can spend your monthly budget and absolutely know where the leads come from, how many hits to the page it takes before someone fills in a form for more information – and quite literally track that lead.

There are really just two considerations when you are creating a Pay Per Click Campaign.

- What's Your Budget
- Who are you Targeting

The Budget will be set as a monthly figure and paid upfront to the Search Engine or Advertising site you believe has a high connection with your Target Market. Your budget could be as little as \$25 a month.

One of the most positive elements of a Pay Per Click Campaign is the ability to test and compare the effectiveness of different ads and different landing pages to create the optimal experience for you new client!

Campaign Basics

Now that you know who you are targeting, and you know what kind of experience they will receive when they get to your site, you need to work on your Keywords... meaning what words will trigger your ad to show up?

What Are Keywords?

One of the first “concepts” Real Estate agents generating leads online need to understand is how “KeyWords” work for us... and against us. To understand “KeyWords” think about your brother – who needs to buy a home. When he sits in front of the “Google Bar” what words is he going to put in to find a home? Well, that might be determined by WHERE he’s looking for a home, right?

Let’s think about it this way... if someone puts “Car” into the Google Search Engine, they are likely to get results that include Ford, Mercedes, BMW even Chevys. They are going to get GENERAL information about “Cars.” That is a “simple” sometimes called “**Head**” Keyword. It’s a top line search term on a very broad topic... and would look like this: homes, houses, new homes, real estate. As a point of reference, the term “New Homes” gets 1,500,000 hits on Google a MONTH.

If that person puts in “Ford Fiesta 2 door hatchback....” They are

going to get a completely different response from Google. That Ford Fiesta guy, for purposes of this explanation, is using **“Buying Words.”** These words, terms, etc. are usually 3 to 4 word terms separated by commas. Sometimes these 3 and 4 word terms are referred to as “Long Tail Keywords.” So it would look like this: new homes California, CA new homes, CA homes for sale. Again, as a point of reference, “New Homes California” gets 14,800 hits a month. “New Homes in San Diego” gets 6,600 hits a month.

Also pay attention to the way people in your area speak. Do people in YOUR AREA “Move” or do they “Relocate.” If they “Relocate” then use that term... if they MOVE, then use that one. If you have no market for **first time home buyers** – don’t use that term! But as a “whole” **first time homebuyers** (did you see that I used that as a 3 word AND a 4 word term?) are a big part of today’s market.

They do not all need to be as “Hyper Local” as New Condos in San Diego – but some of them should be City, neighborhood and property type specific.

Paying For Keyword Strings

Before you start searching for Keywords, it’s probably a good idea to understand that your campaign can be based upon several different types of Keyword strings.

An **EXACT MATCH** campaign is based upon the searcher putting that exact string of characters into the Google search box. This takes most, if not all, guesswork out of the equation. In addition, research shows that exact match keyword campaigns generate a higher click through rate (meaning more people are likely to click on your ad and go to your site).

A **PHRASE MATCH** campaign is based upon the searcher putting the exact string of characters into the Google search box, but

Google can match the root phrase to other terms the searcher may have used. So if my keyword is “Plano Homes” and the searcher puts “Plano Homes for Sale” I would show up!

The third most popular Keyword Campaign is referred to as **Broad Match**. Taking my Plano Homes idea above – with a Broad Match Ad I could show up for anything Plano, anything homes, anything like Homes in Plano... it’s unlimited.

A **NEGATIVE Keyword** is important part of your campaign, as well. Negative keywords are words and phrases that, when used in a search, you don't want your ads to show up for.

When you add negative keywords to your PPC campaigns your ads will not be served if those words are part of the user’s search query. These words will not only benefit you by saving money on wasted clicks, they will also improve the click through rate (CTR) of your keywords/ads, and a higher CTR can decrease the cost of your ads.

Examples of these words for Real Estate could include:

Workshop, white paper , success stories, sublease, training, videos, stats, remodeling, reports, picture, repair, resources, magazine, maps, education, design, furnishings, guides, conference, council, chart, about, case study, class, bulletins, associations, insurance, programs.

Creating Ads – The Basics

When creating a PPC ad there are a few basics to keep in mind. Your headline should be short (25 characters or less), attractive, relevant and include the keyword. Rather than focusing on YOUR name, or the company name, the headline should grab the potential customer's attention.

After you create the headline, your next step is the description,

normally this will be just two lines. Both lines of your description must not exceed 35 characters. Offering a something free is, of course, an incentive to get the potential customer to click on the ad and if you have your landing page set up correctly – you will have a new potential client to put into your drip campaign, or another subscription to your newsletter!

Landing Pages

Once you determine who you are targeting, and what the ad will look like, you need to decide what kind of experience that person expects when they click the link. The page you send them to is called the **LANDING PAGE**, and you'll want to monitor what kind of Landing Page layout seems to motivate the most people to contact you.

Let's think about it this way - If you're investing money into pay-per-click advertising, why send them to the front page of your website? If the ad is targeting First Time Homebuyers – why not take it one step further and create a customized landing page for this campaign?

Chapter 6: Tracking Success

Tools for Tracking Success

Now that you have Traffic coming to your site, you need to track the Traffic, and look for ways to maximize your effort! Google Analytics provides great, free information. For instance, Google gives you the opportunity to see which Keywords someone used to get to your site. If 28% of your traffic came from one topic – I would certainly encourage you to write more about that topic!

Put some of the words you THOUGHT were going to be “strong” into the Keyword Finder and see if you can find different matches. For instance if someone clicks on Home Values, or What Is Your Home Worth – would they also be looking at Appraisal Problems or Market Reports?

Another Free tool to consider would be [Alexa](#). You can use Alexa to compare your statistics with your competition! When looking at your competitor’s site – take note of things like Mortgage Calculator. If homebuyers are clicking through to a calculator – and you don’t have one... it might be time to add it!

Remember that the name of the game in attracting visitors to real estate sites has traditionally been listings. That's definitely changing. As more non-listing information becomes available, consumers will seek it out. Analyzing what you are doing, and what your competition is doing, allows you to make adjustments so that it’s easier for the consumer to find the meaningful information they are looking for!

Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half.
- John Wanamaker

What To Track

Agents should be looking at the ratio between the number of hits (or amount of traffic to the site) and the Leads generated rate. This is actually a very simple calculation: # of leads/amount of traffic. If you have 5 leads out of 100 visits to your site, your conversion rate is 5%.

You might also want to track a second stat of conversion of leads to sales. This will give you an accurate way to describe your sales funnel: If it takes 100 visits to get 5 leads, and it takes 5 leads to get 1 sale, you will need (theoretically) 50 leads to get 10 sales, and 1000 visitors to get 50 leads. This kind of calculation can help you forecast your leads and sales based on traffic.

A note: these kind of forecasting systems are only a guideline, don't take them as fact. You should recalculate your conversion rates on a regular basis (quarterly, monthly, depending on the rate of sales) to get a more reliable picture of your funnel.

Agents should be tracking the Closings to their Investment. Everybody is going to look at this a little differently – but if you figure that you are spending \$400 for hosting and a new blog site, \$3600 on Pay Per Click Ads on Facebook and Yahoo and Google that's \$4000 a year. That's not a bad marketing budget for an Agent – but you better be getting some Closings from it! So take the same calculation above and look at it from a dollars and cents perspective to figure out what your ROI really is.

Gahlord Dahwald – one of the Country's Leading Real Estate Data Crunching Specialist adds this:

"My favorite kind of measurement: looking at the data to see what narratives present themselves. When you're just observing the data and not looking for anything in particular (not calculating

ROI or planning for a specific objective in the future) sometimes you'll find patterns. These patterns might let you know what sort of problems you can solve for other people. Or maybe the patterns will suggest ways you can improve your website or service or product or entire industry."

Tracking The Visitor

Having Demographic information will definitely help you with converting leads and making a site, or a landing page that is hitting the mark – however, few website owners have any demographics or information on the make up of their visitors. [MSN AdCenter](#) provides a great tool for looking at Keywords and Websites to see if your audience will likely be male or female and the age of the consumer.

You can take this data and, for example, change the writing style and the graphics to appeal to your target audience.

Another example is that we often underestimate the impact of the “youth” population. Their habits and content consumption preferences are radically different from us “old” people. The more your skew young the more you need to ensure that you have the right mind set as you create your Ads, Content and Messages.

Google Analytics will also give you very specific information about where the site visitor is located. If you are getting numerous hits on the Buyer's Section of your website from Boise, ID – and you are located in Southern California... you might want to see if there's a group relocating to your area. In addition to this, it would make sense to search out agents in that area to connect with.

Chapter 6:

Summing Up Lead Generation

In a series of case studies done by the California Association of Realtors on Internet Buyers versus Traditional Buyers of Real Estate, the following statistics were noted:

- An Internet Buyer (meaning someone who found you online one way or the other) spends **2.2 weeks**, on average, with their agent before buying, while the non-internet buyer (so called traditional buyer) spent **7.1 weeks** with their agents. That's a lot of gas!
- The Internet Buyer previewed **6.7 homes** while the traditional buyer previewed a whopping **15.4**
- **81%** of Internet Buyers **stay with the first agent** they choose to contact

Why do you think this is? I can tell you... because they already know you. They've already read everything you've written about on that topic. Often times, a buyer or seller will call me from the Internet and not even tell me their name! They just start talking like I already know them, and what they are looking for!

According to the California Realtors report, internet buyers **WILL** come back: **97% of internet buyers would use the same agent on their next transaction versus only 50% of traditional buyers.**

This leads us to believe (and our own experience proves it to be true)... The Internet Buyer is more resourceful, more efficient, and has already decided that the agent they will work with is an area expert, and someone that they hold in high regard! The client will

Internet Lead Generation



use the agent again, refer them to others, and not waste months on a decision!

In short, the Internet Buyer is the perfect client! So don't take them for granted! You're working this hard to get them to contact you - be as efficient as they are. Remember that **time response to inquiries is critical**, use auto-responders for your email, return calls the same day and when it's appropriate... be part of their conversations online. Connect with them and you will see the successful results of your new tech skills!