

Social Media *for* REALTORS®
DIGITAL MARKETING

THIS BOOKLET IS PART OF THE
Social Media for REALTORS® SERIES



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION *of*
REALTORS®

The **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®** (NAR) constantly communicates to consumers and the media the importance of choosing to work with an agent who has the REALTOR® credential because of your unparalleled expertise, access to NAR's many resources and commitment to the Code of Ethics.

Every day, you do your part to promote yourself as a REALTOR®. And every day, your national association is doing the same.

The “That’s Who We R” campaign educates consumers on the REALTOR® difference and becomes an inherent call to action to work with a REALTOR®, who abides by the Code of Ethics.

Because of NAR’s outreach — and your efforts — home buyers and sellers know there’s a difference between a REALTOR® and someone who hasn’t earned the right to carry that name. They recognize you as a trusted professional who is respected within the industry and your community. As a result, when it comes time to buy and sell real estate, consumers turn to you.

Your online presence and the effective use of social media can be key to your success in the real estate business. This guide has two purposes — to help you take your business to a new level through the use of digital marketing and to put into context your responsibilities and duties as a member of NAR when using social media. Strategic use of social media will enhance your reputation for quality and standards of excellence in all real estate-related pursuits.

Use this guide to not only build your knowledge, but to create your own digital marketing plan. Make notes to help you implement and put into practice what you learn along the way! Don’t let this guide be another book on the shelf — choose one thing at a time, then return and implement another.

→ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Watch for these tips for suggestions of ways to execute an action step.

MAKING THE RIGHT FIRST IMPRESSION ONLINE

The Internet has made it perfectly reasonable to sell a home to a buyer you've never met. The Internet has also increased the expectation among consumers that your business will have a credible online presence. Prospects you've never encountered are forming opinions about you and your business at the click of a mouse.

Internet first impressions are not just influenced by how your website looks, but also by how often your business appears in searches on keywords and your presence on the more popular real estate sites. Once consumers find you, is their real estate search aided by your content? Do you write or present material in a way that makes sense to them? Can they relate to you online? Connecting with the people in your area and the community itself is key.

Establishing relationships with people and sharing knowledge and information about the area and real estate market will prove your expertise — critical to today's consumers. They want to feel they know a bit about you — through what you have shared with them (not at them); this builds trust and confidence.

According to the *2018 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers*, 95% of all buyers used the Internet when searching for a home to purchase; 89% of these buyers purchased the homes they find with a real estate agent, stressing the importance of the agent in the buying and search process. Consumers find blogs, real estate search websites and forums through these searches. As clients read, explore and research, they find an agent's listings, bio and posts. Consumers start feeling like they know that agent before they even meet him/her in person. The relationship building begins online, with their first impression of you.

One of the common objections to creating an online presence is budget. Many people think that they just don't have the time and/or excess budget to establish an online presence. You don't need a large budget and/or outlay of time to effectively begin a digital marketing campaign.



VIDEO TIP: You'll find that a number of tips have a video icon next to them. You can find out more about these tips at www.NAR.realtor/SMRTips. These tips are maintained by NAR's Director of Digital Engagement Nobu Hata who has extensive experience in real estate technology and social space on both the member and association level. The videos are meant to provide you enhanced information on the tip shared. This information is meant to provide you with a general start for all social networks and media.



LOOK FOR THE LINK ICON

This symbol will alert you to the helpful Web link to follow.

WHAT IS DIGITAL MARKETING AND WHAT CAN IT DO FOR YOU?

Digital marketing is Web-based marketing. You may see it called Web marketing, online marketing or digital marketing. It is the marketing of products or services over the Internet.

The Internet has brought media to a global audience. The interactive nature of digital marketing in terms of providing instant responses and eliciting feedback is what makes this medium unique. Internet marketing is sometimes considered to be broad in scope because it not only refers to marketing on the Internet, but also includes marketing done via email and wireless media. Internet marketing ties together creative and technical aspects of the Internet, including design, development, advertising and sales.

Internet marketing also refers to the placement of media along many different stages of the customer engagement cycle through search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), banner ads on specific websites, email marketing and Web 2.0 strategies.¹

This guide will help you understand these items and the way business has shifted with the Internet age, helping you market your business in the ever-changing virtual world. Our goal is to have REALTORS® learn best practices for increasing traffic to their websites by making their sites the hub of their online marketing efforts. We will review all the online tools available to help communicate with today's online consumer.

DIGITAL MARKETING CAN HELP YOU:

- Establish a powerful online reputation, brand and presence.
- Be present and available where your target consumers are spending time online.
- Stay connected with your sphere of influence, allowing you to both maintain and strengthen those relationships.
- Create, build and develop relationships with potential clients through social media and integrated content. This also includes forming new connections with potential clients you may not have met otherwise.
- Use analytics to evaluate and determine the most valuable activity online with frequent assessment to plan future activity.
- Engage in search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), email marketing, mobile marketing and Web 2.0 strategies.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EMarketing>

ADVANTAGES OF DIGITAL MARKETING

ONLINE MARKETING HAS MANY BENEFITS. IT CAN BE:

- **Highly Targeted** – The ability to add specific and customized items to your online marketing content allows you to attract highly targeted customers to your website. It offers easily measurable knowledge of how many people are visiting your website, how they found you and what they looked at while on your site. This is invaluable information for a better understanding of your customers and provides you the ability to supply what they require. Digital marketing allows you to obtain full tracking figures through your website analytics tools and gives you the ability to track the return on investment for the marketing you do. Better tracking ensures better investment of marketing time, energy and dollars.
- **Immediate** – Time is crucial in business. A digital marketing campaign is easy to set up and implement and lets consumers immediately respond to the campaign, allowing you to see results in real time.
- **Cost Effective** – Noting tight budgets, many digital marketing tools are inexpensive or even free.
- **Viral Advocacy** – If people enjoy the content and experience on your website, they become an advocate for you offline and on the Web and social media. This leads to referral business — people trust friends and family. For most buyers, referrals continue to be the primary method for finding an agent. According to the *2016 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers*, 64% of people of buyers found their agent through a referral.

Many features of a digital marketing campaign are easily shareable and allow for agents to market their business themselves.

In order to determine what type of digital marketing strategy is best for you, you need to evaluate the effectiveness of your existing marketing strategies. By using analytic tools, which we'll discuss later, you can determine which elements of your marketing strategy do not work and replace them with some new online marketing tools that may perform more effectively. If this is done a little at a time, you can monitor the changes you make and see if they are making a difference in your marketing. Blending offline and online marketing strategies together can result in even higher returns on your marketing investments.

BUDGET AND TIME — CREATING AN ONLINE PRESENCE

As we've said, one of the common objections to creating an online presence is budget. Many people think that they just don't have the time and/or budget to establish an online presence. A large budget and/or outlay of time is not required to effectively begin a digital marketing campaign.

You will need to include the time you spend on your online presence as part of your investment. The financial budget has many variables. If you are comfortable with the computer, you can create a website and social networking presence for next to nothing. That's right, zero dollars. On the other hand, you can opt to spend thousands of dollars on a customized website. It's all up to you, your budget, your goals, your availability and your needs. In the list below, the different elements that make up a digital marketing strategy are broken down for you, providing a rule of thumb for the budget and time needed for each item. Some people may choose to spend more time and/or less time and budget on each item as they begin to analyze results associated with their campaigns.

- Build Your Own Website/Blog
 - Time: 1 to 24 hours and 1 hour per post
 - Budget: \$0 to \$100
 - Domain Setup: \$10/year and 15 minutes to set up
- Customized Website/Blog
 - Time: 1 to 4 hours and 1 hour per post
 - Budget: \$500 to \$5,000 plus possible monthly fee
- Facebook Page
 - Time: 1 to 3 hours
 - Budget: \$0 to \$300
- Setup of Social Networking Sites
 - Time: Ongoing
 - Budget: \$0 to \$300
- Email Newsletter
 - Time: 2 to 3 hours monthly
 - Budget: \$0 to \$150 monthly



- Mobile Friendly/Ready Marketing
 - Time: 1 to 3 hours
 - Budget: \$10 to \$300
- Listing Syndication (Check with your broker to see if he/she provides this for you.)
 - Time: 1 to 3 hours monthly
 - Budget: \$0 to \$30 monthly
- Single-Listing Websites
 - Time: 1 to 3 hours monthly
 - Budget: \$10 to \$150 monthly

Consider your overall marketing budget and determine if some of the dollars you spend on print advertising should be redirected to digital marketing.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Build your own website/blog with the free realtor.com® profile website option with the .realtor™ web address. Find out more about .realtor™ and, our newest top-level domain, .realestate, at www.get.realtor.



YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

As clients continue to increase their use of the Internet in real estate, the Web presence of REALTORS® becomes even more important. According to the *2016 Member Profile*, more than two-thirds of all REALTORS® reported having a website. Among those who did not have a website, 81% planned to have one in the future. The majority of REALTORS® have had a website for five years.

Among residential brokerage specialists with websites, more than 89% had information about their own property listings, home buying and selling, and mortgage or financial calculators on their sites. On commercial brokerage specialists' websites, more than half had their own property listings, a link to the firm's website, and information about home buying and selling.

As of August 2019, over 409 million people view more than 20 billion word press pages each month. Users produce about 70 million new posts and 77 million new comments each month. Because of this, the use of blogs has steadily increased as a marketing tool for real estate agents. 67% have a website with 51% of those people having it for more than five years. In 2010, 10% of members reported having a blog. Among REALTORS®, blogs are most common among those aged 30 to 39, and nearly one in five members in this age group has a blog.

According to the *2019 Member Profile*, 77% of all REALTORS® use social media in some way, and 73% use it for their real estate business. The reasons stated were “to build relationships, network, and give themselves visibility and exposure.” Seventy-seven percent of agents are on Facebook and 58% percent are on LinkedIn. In 2008, 67 percent of survey respondents did not engage in social media.

***Just a few short years ago, social media was an afterthought.
Now, social media is fully integrated into real estate firms' marketing plans,
with both a reliance and focus on it.***

The referrals generated by your social network of family, friends and people you know are strategically vital to your business. But this does not mean you can't place some separation between your business friends or prospects and your purely personal social network. An example of how this separation is starting to be noticeable is with Facebook, which in November of 2010 made a firm distinction between business pages and personal profiles.



NAR has developed a template for its members with the purpose of providing brokers with a starting point that may be used when developing a social media policy for the broker's own firm. The template is on www.NAR.realtor and is called How to Create a Social Media Policy. The document lays out what brokers and agents can and cannot do online, including on blogs and other social media sites. You can find the full policy at: https://www.nar.realtor/letterlw.nsf/pages/0510rm_socialmedia.

The template suggests the scope of the broker's policy should extend to all uses of social media in connection with the real estate business (including any use in which the agent seeks to promote or capture real estate business from consumers or other agents). The broker's policy is not intended to cover the activities of agents falling completely outside the real estate business. Any conduct, however, which reflects adversely upon broker or the brokerage may be reviewed under the terms of this policy. Confirm that your the broker has a social media usage policy. If your broker doesn't have a policy, you may want to review the template for ideas applicable to your blog/website. For example, the template suggests a standard for what identifying information about the agent or brokerage to include on the blog/website. The template finds its basis in both the Code of Ethics and the Rules and Regulations of many real estate commissions.



MAKE YOUR WEBSITE THE HUB OF YOUR BUSINESS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® has created a guide about creating and maintaining a content-rich website to help you build a strong hub. It is called *Social Media for REALTORS®: Your Website* guide and it is sold individually or as part of the *Social Media for REALTORS® Series VIP 4 Pack*, including all 4 guides in the series, at www.Store.realtor/SMR.

Having your website as the hub for all your marketing is your best strategy. Your website is the focal point for all of your marketing campaigns where you direct all of your Internet traffic. It is your online storefront, where you are constantly available — the best representation of your business and your professionalism. Your site should have searches, community and real estate information and, most importantly, ways for the consumer to get in touch with you when he or she is ready to buy or sell. This is where you establish your reputation and begin to build relationships as consumers learn to appreciate you and how you do business.

Your hub can be a traditional website or other type of Web page. Your other online marketing efforts, including participation on social networks, are the spokes that point your consumers back to your hub. Let's look at some different examples people can use for their hubs:

STATIC WEBSITE

A static website is a website with various pages of content that don't need updating. The content never changes — remains static — without effort on your part. Some will include extra widgets that will update content, like a home search widget that pulls information from another site/source to display your featured listings. Many agents use a template website that has similar, "canned" content provided to all agents. For example, an office may have websites for their agents that contain the same community, transaction and company information on all pages. It's important to provide information unique to you/your target audience so you aren't diluted as consumers read the "same ole information" out there with a hundred other people. A great place to start is to Google yourself. Go to www.google.com/trends/ and search for your "*your city* real estate," and what you'll find are the geographic locations that people are searching in your state. Consider having website content (schools, economic and other relevant information) on your website that's geared to them. Try to customize and personalize any additional pages you have available.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** — Make sure to include your website address in your email signature and on all your print materials.

A blog website is dynamic instead of static, meaning it is frequently updated with new content. A blog is a powerful hub because it is easy to personalize, is easy to change and is very flexible. It allows your personality and professionalism to shine. Blogs can look similar to static websites, incorporating many of the same features, including video, photos, documents and real estate listing information. Many agents focus their blog on real estate and the community in which they work. The schedule of updates varies with each blog, but the benefit is in the articles. Leverage the power of the multitudes of blog platforms at your disposal (most are Web and smartphone based!). Photo, written word, a mix of the two — for every business or marketing plan you have, there's a platform that'll work for you. Establish yourself as an area, neighborhood, town, specialty home or lakefront property expert within your blog and write articles that will be of value to your ideal consumer. A bonus is that many blogs can be managed with a smartphone or tablet, making updates as easy as whipping out your phone and snapping a picture.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** — There are many different topics you can write about.

You'll find your own writing voice by practicing. Some successful bloggers write how they speak. The goal of blogging is to provide useful information to your readers while showcasing your knowledge and professionalism as a REALTOR®.

FACEBOOK PAGE

Facebook should be just one part of your overall “online marketing” strategy. The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® has created a guide on Facebook to help you bring all aspects of your online marketing endeavors together into one plan. The *Social Media for REALTORS®: Facebook* guide is sold individually or as part of the *Social Media for REALTORS® Series VIP 4 Pack*, including all 4 guides in the series, at www.Store.realtor/SMR.



Facebook allows users to create a business “Page” to represent their business on the site. These are different than your personal Facebook “Profile,” which represent actual people, not businesses or companies.

Some agents may choose to use a Facebook “Page” as their hub, although it lacks customization, search engine prominence and analytic tracking. It also makes it difficult for visitors to find information using any type of search. As you update your content, the older entries are hidden. If you choose, however, to use a Facebook “Page” for your central spot, be sure to have your contact information prominently displayed.

Your Facebook business “Page” can be used as a spoke to drive traffic to your website or blog hub. Share links to posts or pages on your site so that your “Page” followers can find the content you are writing.

BUSINESS CARD SITE



A one-site online business card allows you to summarize all of your social media and marketing activities into one easy-to-find hub. Sites like <http://about.me> allow you to quickly create a single page site that lists all of the various networks to which you are associated and provide a hyperlink to access them.

A business card site can also host your phone numbers and point to other websites you have. Business card sites are an aggregator for all of the places where you can be found on the Web. You could also use a Google Profile for this purpose. Google offers profiles for no charge and you can set one up at <https://profiles.google.com>.



ADWERX

Adwerx, a partner in REALTOR Benefits® Program, is a simple and effective platform designed to boost real estate professionals' digital marketing strategy. Agents can target prospects online to build awareness of their brand, get more referrals and promote listings to a targeted group when they're using mobile apps, Facebook, and surfing home search sites like realtor.com®, as well as when they're visiting CNN, Yahoo, and local news sites. NAR members receive an exclusive 15% additional impressions on newly purchased or renewed campaigns, an extra value when stacked with any existing Adwerx offers NAR members may already have in place through their brokerage, association or other Adwerx partner.

NAR.realtor/RealtorBenefits/Adwerx

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BACK AT YOU

Back At You, a partner in NAR's REALTOR Benefits® Program, helps agents promote themselves, their brand, and their listings on social media platforms in a way that's automated, targeted, and fully customizable. Agents can link their social media profiles, add their MLS data, specify their target market, and more. Then Back At You's innovative Social Media Center automatically and beautifully posts content to the practitioner's social media pages. Back At You has exclusive pricing on individual plans for NAR members, and there is also an enterprise plan for brokers.

NAR.realtor/RealtorBenefits/BackAtYou



PLACESTER®

Placester®, a partner in NAR's REALTOR Benefits® Program, offers NAR members access to websites with beautiful mobile-ready design, hassle-free hosting, and more. Their turnkey solution includes everything needed to build an online presence, including quick setup and personalization, without the need for technical or programming skills. Beyond its websites and marketing tools, Placester® also offers a Real Estate Marketing Academy with free educational content, including how-to articles, infographics, videos and webinars about digital marketing for real estate. NAR.realtor/RealtorBenefits/Placester



TAP INTO THE POWER OF YOUR WEBSITE

Regardless of the type of hub you choose, be sure you have one; this is the central spot you will use as your home base to send traffic. Here is where you'll focus the information your readers want and focus the effort to have people contact you for their real estate transaction. An ideal hub will offer the features of a static website with the key dynamic content and information of a blog site. Combining these two types of media will allow you to get the most bang for your buck.

HERE ARE SOME KEY ELEMENTS A SUCCESSFUL HUB WILL HAVE:

- **About Me** – As one of the most read pages of a hub, you'll want to make it short and personal. Don't just bullet list your education and designations — explain them with a sentence or two. You could even embed a short video to introduce yourself. Make it friendly, and allow your personality to show.
- **Areas of Specialization** – What are the areas you specialize in? If you specialize in certain properties/transactions, explain. Perhaps even include a map of the area you serve.
- **Contact Information** – Make it easy for the consumer to find how to reach you. Be sure to have your contact information on every page and in various methods (phone, email, social networks, etc.). Don't forget your brokerage information according to the Code of Ethics and your office policy.
- **Custom Content** – Add information for your area: community and real estate related. Maybe include a directory of affiliates or local businesses. Become an unofficial ambassador to living in your community. Or, write about the Offer to Purchase contract or the short sale process. Stand apart from other sites. Be different.
- **Home Search** – You can opt for anything from a free to a costly version of an IDX “Internet Data Exchange” search site to place listings on your site. Remember, consumers will find what they are looking for from someone online — will it be you? An IDX site may require registration before using it, but it still might help in your search to find the right one for you to register and test out using this type of site.
- **Home Value** – Sellers often visit a real estate site to get a valuation of their property. Market reports, graphs and request forms can all help you provide this to a seller.

- **Statistics** – Community members want to find out what properties have been selling for in their area and neighborhood. If you update your data, these visitors will return over and over again. Then, when they're ready to make a move, they'll remember you provided the expertise of the market. Provide visuals like charts/graphs and narrative.
- **Local Content** – People living in your community will appreciate community information. School districts, government town meetings and newspapers are all good resources for this information. Share this type of information along with your thoughts; it's your job to provide the context for how your audience can think about what you are sharing. Pictures and videos of the area are also reasons locals will return to your site.
- **Calls to Action** – Tell the visitors what you want them to do. Use these calls to action throughout the site:
 - Email for more information
 - Click here to sign up for a free newsletter
 - For the latest market report on your neighborhood, fill out this form
 - Call me at 555-555-5555
- **Policy** – Establish a policy on your site regarding comments that are allowed/prohibited. If your content is copyrighted and you don't want it stolen, state that. Make sure it is clear if you are an agent and in what state you hold a real estate license.
- **Share, Like, Link** – People want to join you in being the expert. Make sure your site has ways for people to “Share” your link, to “Like” your article and to “Like” what you've said. Customizable sites will allow for social plugins to be added. Adding a comments section also allows you to have conversations with your readers.

Expert Bobby Carroll of Dakno Marketing shares, “Whatever you choose, there are some basic best practices that you should consider when implementing real estate website design. Site visitors couldn't care less if the portal they are on is called a blog or a website. It's all about having easy access to information and tools to help in their home buying (and selling) endeavors. Make sure the real estate website offers the site visitor the structure for hyper-local area, neighborhood and condo building information, testimonials, staff pages, buyer articles, seller articles, calculators and engagement opportunities with highly customizable forms.”

➔ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Take a close look at your website from a consumer's perspective. Does it work? Visit your local coffee shop and offer to buy a cup of coffee in exchange for 10 minutes of time. Have your laptop ready and let consumers explore your site. Tell them you want to hear what they think — most importantly the negative critique.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA CONCEPTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The Web 2.0 platform facilitates conversations, relationship building and trust. When you begin to think about sharing your links on sites/social media platforms, remember to focus on the relationship building. If you constantly send out market reports, but don't talk and engage with the people in the area, you will be talking to a brick wall. Ensure that when you are online you are engaging with your audience and follow these dos and don'ts:

- don't be a spammer
- don't try to "sell" people or talk real estate all the time
- do keep your interaction personal and professional

When you begin to get involved in the various social media sites, don't sell yourself and your business. Remember that people on social media sites want to build relationships. They want to have something in common with you; finding this commonality can be easy. It could be as simple as you both live in MYCITY. It might be that you both have a dog. You may both patronize the local ice cream shop. Build on the things you have in common just as you would in the offline world.

The best thing to occur within online networking circles is when someone else shares a link to one of your posts. It is considered bad form if you shout out your links to posts you've written and aren't trying to engage people in this space. People using online platforms to talk AT people are missing a big piece of networking. It is important to always ask for feedback and include a call to action with anything you do; this will invite people to get involved in what you're writing about or marketing.

After you have listened, begin to join in the conversation. Concentrate your efforts on building your social media networks with the people in your service area. Eventually they (or someone they know) will be buying or selling their home. The more local people you add to your network, the greater possibility the real estate leads will come to you. As you begin to venture into conversation, it's perfectly acceptable to eavesdrop. If one of your connections has made a comment about something on his or her Facebook wall, it's fine for you to leave him or her a comment and join the discussion.

When you are posting updates/links on various sites, try to follow the formula below. It's more important to talk with others than to constantly post your links out there. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- 20% linking your content
- 20% linking to other people's content (a local sports team, restaurant, school district, government office, local blogger, reciprocal linking, etc.)
- 20% other business talk
- 40% engage. Talk personally and network. People love it online as much as they do offline.

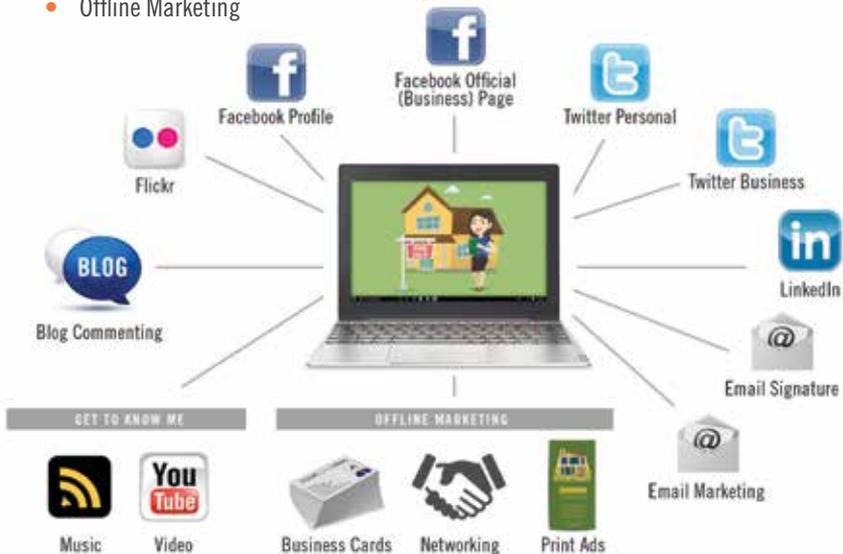
You can find out more about how to maximize usage of these social media resources by purchasing a copy of *Social Media for REALTORS®: 101+ Dos and Don'ts* available at a greatly discounted member price at www.Store.realtor/SMR.



DRIVING TRAFFIC TO YOUR HUB

Once your hub is established, you can start creating your spokes. Spokes are the channels that will drive traffic to your site and your listings. The spokes are the marketing tools you use to drive traffic and touch the consumer; they are the keys to a successful digital marketing campaign. There are a number of options for both offline and online marketing tools to use as spokes to your website. The best ones are ones that you'll actually use. Here is a brief list of some of the most common tools used. Note some are online and some offline. Spokes can look like many different things. Here are the primary spokes you'll use in your marketing:

- Blogs
- Social Networks
- Listing Marketing
- Mobile Media
- Online Marketing Tools
- Offline Marketing



EXPLORING THE SPOKES

BLOGS

Blogs can be used as both the hub for your business or as a great spoke to bring consumers to your site. Blogs offer near real-time information and a fresh, relevant experience to today's consumer. The content on blogs is dynamic content, constantly updated. As it turns out, search engines favor websites with frequently updated pages, which is the nature of a blog. Search engines have increased the frequency of indexing the most active websites. If you have a lot of active content, you can imagine the positive impact this has on the visibility of you and your company when a client searches for content you are posting. People use online search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing every single day. When you are smart with how you write and update your content, your SEO (Search Engine Optimization) will help your website/blog appear as a result of their searches. There are a few different blog options available:

- **Real Estate Blogs** – A website with content frequently updated and focused on real estate subjects of interest. This will allow you to position yourself as an expert in the real estate arena.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Consider a monthly post from an industry expert, a mortgage broker, a stager, or an attorney.

- **Community Blogs** – A website focused on the community events, location and area with content updated on a regular basis.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Create a category for each town in your market or each condominium building you sell. Every time you post an article or a photo about the town or condo, make sure it gets categorized under that town.

- **Photo/Video Blogs** – Make regular blog posts using either photos or videos. Photo/Video blogs are posts that have photos with a small amount of text or a video with relevant content to your site.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Try using the video camera on your smartphone to create video blog posts about your community.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – If you're interested in learning more about how and why to create a site with dynamic content, you can do so by purchasing *Social Media for REALTORS®: Your Website* available at a greatly discounted member price at www.Store.realtor.



SOCIAL NETWORKS

A social network focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others.

Most social network services provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as posting updates, sending messages to others on their profiles, or through email and instant messaging services. In any social network, your impact is directly related to the quality of your content. The result of your influence is strengthened by consistency and repetition, so participation in a number of spaces is important, though the quality of the content is crucial. Below you will find the social networks you can use as spokes in your campaign.

facebook

There are two types of pages you can utilize on Facebook, a personal “Profile” and/or a business “Page.” Below are the details on both.

Facebook Personal Profile – Facebook can be used to connect with clients (past, present and future) and nurture a relationship by making conversation or “Liking” posts. You’ll be connecting with friends, family and acquaintances on your personal “Profile.” Your “Profile” should not be used as your only marketing tool because it is meant to be personal and fun. Also, it is a violation of Facebook’s terms of service to use a personal “Profile” to promote a business. Stand out among your connections. Using your Webcam, send a video message for a happy birthday to your local network. If you’re really brave, sing your message. When you connect with people on Facebook, they become your Facebook “Friends.” If you do not wish to be Facebook “Friends” with someone, you can opt to share “Subscriptions” to your “News Feed,” which allows them to see any updates that you set as public.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Focus on connections with your local database vs. other real estate professionals. Engage in conversation and “Like” some updates every day. Import your contact database under the friends section, decide who you want to connect with and create an online relationship.

Facebook Business Pages – A business “Page” can be used to focus on the business side of the client relationship and content. This is the page to post listings, talk shop, and market yourself and your business. A Facebook business “Page” allows you to create a presence for your business and promote it within the Facebook community. Facebook users can opt-in to receive messages on Facebook about your business by “Liking” your business “Page.” Facebook business “Pages” can be used to share information and engage in discussion with fans.

Differences between a Facebook Personal “Profile” and a Business “Page” – A Facebook “Profile,” also known as your personal timeline, is the standard Facebook experience, representing one person, his or her interests, and his or her connections with other Facebook users. A Facebook “Page,” on the other hand, may be used to brand a product or represent a company, real estate professional, community or special interest group. Facebook offers many FREE ways to help a company interact with the users who choose to connect with or “Like” them. Put simply, “Profiles” are for people and “Pages” are for businesses. Referrals generated by your social network of family, friends and others you know are vital to your business. This is where a business Facebook “Page” comes into play.

twitter

Twitter is a microblogging platform that allows you to post messages that are 280 characters long, in which you “Follow” people and you develop “Followers.” Every time you post a message, everyone who “Follows” you receives it, either on www.Twitter.com or via one of many Twitter reader tools.

Twitter posts, or tweets, can include hyperlinks to blog posts or web pages, which encourage people to engage with you. In addition, people can share (or “retweet”) your Twitter posts expanding their reach. To develop a following, you must start by being a follower. Find people in your community and start reaching out and following them. As on many social networking sites, it is important to engage with people here. You do not need to know individuals to follow them or have them follow you.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – If you are new to Twitter, give it a try for two weeks.

Connect with no more than 25 active users. Start with community leaders, influencers and journalists. Listen, and then join in the conversation. Advanced Twitter user? Organize a Tweetup to meet people in your area face-to-face. Once you have gotten the hang of www.Twitter.com and you want to include Twitter in your social endeavors, there are third-party software platforms that allow you to monitor key words and people on Twitter. They also allow you to schedule posts and monitor your influence. When using Twitter as a spoke in your marketing strategy, we suggest you use such a service (most are free) to monitor tweets and stay on top of your

Twitter feed. These services can actually connect your different social media presences and make it easier to monitor all of them at once. These are:



- Hootsuite: www.Hootsuite.com
- TweetDeck: www.Tweetdeck.com

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional network. Build a network of past colleagues, friends and industry experts. You can share status updates and links here similar to the way that you share them on Facebook, but in a setting that is geared to professional interaction. Ask people to write recommendations of your work and endorse you. Consider joining the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® group on LinkedIn to network and share ideas with other REALTORS®. LinkedIn is often referred to as the online resume. Your profile contains your business credentials, education history, and positions past and present. The network of connections is more controlled — you should know a person before adding him or her to your network. LinkedIn recommendations are powerful testimonies because they come directly from the recommender. Ask for recommendations from current/past clients and affiliates.



snapchat

Snapchat is, as of this writing, an emerging social media platform that has yet to be leveraged en masse by the industry mostly because the average user of the platform is too young to be in the market to buy or sell a home. Users looking to access the potential of the platform should take a page out of the playbook of brands trying to tap into the Snapchat universe and focus on building a brand to attract an audience of existing and future clients. Tell a story of your business. Record quick tips and tricks to save for a home, record home improvement ideas and short interviews with service providers that solve problems for you and your clients. Show off your community and neighborhood points of interest. Cover festivals and events in your home town. Tell a really compelling story that will draw a crowd to your brand for a platform literally in its newborn phase (for REALTORS®, anyways) so think really, really, really long term if you use this.

Instagram

Instagram could be considered the teenage older brother of Snapchat with a more developed crowd and a penchant for story telling functionality wrapped up in a more mature bunch of users who want to get away from the noise of other social media.

Much of the Snapchat playbook is in play on Instagram with a bonus being Facebook connectivity. Since the two connect, there is a ton of user overlap so you might be finding yourself with friends on both platforms so try your best not to duplicate your efforts. It's an extremely fertile ground for visual media: listings, neighborhood and community story telling peppered with infographics and personal posts. If you utilize video marketing in your business, deploying them here is a no-brainer. Don't sell; always share.

Where the Facebook-to-Instagram connectivity becomes interesting is in social media ads. If you run Facebook ad campaigns from your business page, you can connect your Instagram account to it and will funnel your ads from Facebook to Instagram seamlessly. “Tips to buy your home” or “Tips to sell your home” in a visual way driving people back to your website or Facebook page work well here.

flickr™

Flickr is a storage place for photos, as well as a social network. If you use Flickr, you will meet people looking for great local pictures and people finding your photos. Flickr has a great interface that lets you also post photos to your blogs.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Find groups based on location in your area. Post some photos and comment on other photos from users in your area. If there isn’t a group for YOURTOWN — create one.

Taking pictures of the community you serve and labeling them correctly will help build you as an expert. Images are often found as a result of a local person searching for information online. People can land right into your Flickr pages, where you’ll have all of your contact information prominently displayed.

FOURSQUARE

Foursquare is a location-based social network that allows people to check in to places they frequent. This allows for friendly competition among local people to check in the most times at an establishment. If you concentrate on checking in and leaving reviews for the businesses, parks, restaurants, etc. in your area, you are reaching local people. You can see who else has visited the same place and leave/read tips about the establishment. These are local people right at your fingertips — connect with them! The Corcoran Group in New York City has more than 22,650 followers in their Foursquare network. They have focused on leaving tips on local businesses and places of interest in the city where they sell real estate. Local residents see them as an expert in their community because of the reputation they have developed — enhanced by their use of Foursquare.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Look for your favorite places to visit on Foursquare and Yelp. Who else has visited there? Make a new connection. Leave a tip at your favorite spots.

YouTube

YouTube is the most popular video-sharing network. YouTube can be used to host videos of you, including interviews on community or real estate topics, listing videos, or community-specific videos. Comments should be allowed, in order to engage interest.

Taking a video and then posting it on YouTube or other video-sharing sites can be done in a matter of minutes. Be sure to label the tags (keywords that describe the video), map the video location (hopefully in your service area) and title it with interesting keywords. This will help your video show up in search engine results.

Videos can show your personality and allow you to market yourself in a unique way. Here are some suggestions of videos that you can create and use on your website, post on video-sharing sites and send via email:

- **Welcome Video** – Tell current and potential clients what to expect on your site and invite them to look around.
- **Video of Key Personnel** – We love to look at people! Think about all the star magazines at the local checkout counter. This will introduce the clients to you and your team. Put this video in the “About Us” page of your website.
- **Services You Offer** – List any special services or what you may do for your client.
- **Real Estate Topic-Based Information** – Put videos together with information for first-time buyers, like on 1031 exchanges. Put testimonial videos together featuring new homeowners in front of their home or at the signing table. Create a video about the community or neighborhoods you service. Let customers know where the banks are, where the dog park is, and what type of theatre and cultural events exist.

Pinterest

Pinterest is a site for sharing links and photos. Real estate uses include sharing home decorating, home maintenance tips and even some listings. Pinterest describes itself as “a tool for collecting and organizing things you love.” www.Pinterest.com

Every social network that you participate in has a profile or an “About You” section. First impressions on these sites are important. Don’t rush when creating your “About” section. Ask opinions of various age groups and connections. Each social network might say something similar in your bio, but state it in a very different way depending on the network. Make sure your photograph is current and your bio is full of your personality. Everywhere you have a profile is another opportunity to allow people to get to know you. You are marketing yourself and your business through your participation on a social network. Be sure that you remember that items you post reflect and tie back to your overall marketing strategy. Don’t forget to always link back to your hub.

LISTING MARKETING

Real estate searches are done through many different Internet portals. Today, national sites such as realtor.com®, Trulia and Zillow serve millions of visitors. As a member of your local MLS, you will most likely get syndication through realtor.com® as an automatic part of that membership. Syndicating your listings to the most popular consumer sites and giving your listings maximum exposure just makes sense. Always read the Terms of Use notice before agreeing to participate on any site.

Check with your local MLS to find a list of their approved syndication providers that work hand in hand with them. If your MLS does not offer either of these services, you may consider other syndicating services like Postlets, VFlyer and ListHub. You manually enter a listing once and submit it to the list of real estate search engines these sites subscribe to; when the property data changes, you open your account on the syndication site and make the change. If you use listing syndication services, it is your responsibility to update the information if/when it changes. If an active listing is no longer on the market, you cannot continue to list it online as available.

Marketing your properties is just as important as marketing yourself. People will find you through these listings, so make it as easy as possible for them to do this.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – The realtor.com® app for professionals makes it easier to keep up with leads and clients from realtor.com no matter where you are.

Follow up with your realtor.com® leads faster with push notifications sent directly to your smartphone. Call, text or email leads and contacts directly from the app to help streamline your follow-up. Keep your leads and contacts organized by updating their status on the go. nar.realtor/realtorcom

SINGLE LISTING WEBSITES

Single listing websites are good ways to market a property online. A single listing website is a domain name specifically for a home for sale. This website can be marketed on sign riders, property flyers and email responses to inquiries.

When you set up your site, make sure you add all the elements that a consumer would want to see. Below is a list of the items you'll want to include (whether on a single listing site or as part of any of your listings) with the percentage of consumers who rated this feature as very useful in the home search process, according to the *2018 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers*:

- 87% Photos
- 85% Detailed information about properties for sale
- 52% Floor plans
- 46% Virtual video tours
- 42% Real estate agent contact information
- 39% Neighborhood information
- 37% Interactive maps



Use the unique Web address for this website wherever you market this property. On the Web, and in print, include this address so potential buyers can have immediate access to detailed information about the particulars of this home.

These sites can be standalone or attached to your existing website. Either way, a direct Web address can be written down off a sign rider and bring people directly to the information they requested. If possible, include a form that allows buyers to schedule a showing of the home.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Create a single property site and link to the address everywhere! Sellers will love to see a site focused on their home.

Some resources for developing a single listing website include:

- Single Property Sites
 - <http://www.singlepropertysites.com>
 - Offers a free basic single listing website
 - Upgrade to a membership to allow for mobile marketing, syndication, etc.
- My Single Property Websites
 - <http://mysinglepropertywebsites.com>
 - Prices range from \$19 to \$29 per site; sign riders and custom domains are extra
- eProperty Sites
 - <http://www.epropertiesites.com/features/single-property-websites>
 - \$10 per website

If you choose to market your properties using the single listing website, be certain your full contact information is on the site and offer the client the option to view all of your properties by providing your hub address.

MOBILE MEDIA

MOBILE MARKETING WEBSITES

Mobile marketing websites allow consumers to continue their search online right from their mobile device. By optimizing your site for the mobile experience, you're enhancing communication with consumers and increasing the satisfaction with their search experience. Mobile websites are formatted to fit any device with Internet access. Agents have the ability to customize their website to further enhance the overall user experience. Some mobile-ready sites can be customized for iPads® and tablets, as well as smart-phone users, to optimize their accessibility.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Test your websites on your mobile device (and on friends' devices too!). Make sure they load and are correct.

There are also other ways to use mobile marketing, including:

- **Agent Apps** – Many real estate agents have had their own Apps developed for use by their clients for home searches, property profiles and more.
- **Single Property Mobile Websites** – Prospective buyers can text a Mobile ID (short code) to instantly receive property information, the link to the Single Property Mobile Website and the listing agent's contact information. This feature can be upgraded as part of a membership with a single site operator, typically with a fee.
- **Text ID (SMS)** – Using a short code, the consumer can receive and access property information, pictures and the agent's contact information directly on their cell phone via text message.
- **QR Codes** – A QR code is a two-dimensional bar code. Using a QR code reader on a smartphone, information is sent directly to the consumer's phone about the property or company. QR codes are free. Google offers them, as well as many other companies.
- **Gateway Apps** – A Gateway Application™ allows you to use the logo of your choice and allows users to install an entrance to your mobile website as an App. You can leverage the power of having your brand on your user's mobile phone, without the cost of developing a full iPhone® App.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Chat through mobile on a branded [realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com)® mobile listing site with a free mobile application branded to you that you can then send out to your prospective customers. This allows you to confer with your customers as they search and discover homes on their mobile devices. When they find something they like, they can share this with you and you can provide commentary and follow-up, all through the application. Find out more at www.realtor.com/engage.

Smart Insights curated some statistics on the usage and growth of mobile applications and consumers are rapidly embracing applications on their mobile devices. For 2019, the number of smartphone users in the United States is estimated to reach 222.9 million, with the number of smartphone users worldwide forecast to exceed 2 billion users by the end of the year. 64.8 % of the US population is estimated to use a smartphone by the end of 2017. In the United States in 2016, smartphone owners had an average of 88.7 apps installed on their smartphones but only used 24.9 of them on a monthly basis.²

²<https://techjury.net/stats-about/smartphone-usage/>

PODCASTS

People like to receive information via many different multimedia methods, including reading text, watching videos and listening to audio. To engage people with audio, you can use podcasts. Podcasts are audio bits of information that you record and distribute. You can have podcasts on your website, hosted on a site or even distributed via iTunes. You can offer real estate-related updates like local market trends and/or community information in a podcast.



→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Try www.AudioBoo.com and record a clip to post. Track your stats to see what is popular so you'll know what to duplicate and whether or not audio is a feature you'd benefit from adding to your site.

INSTANT MESSAGING/CHAT FEATURES

There are many programs that allow for instant messaging like Google GChat/Hangouts, Yahoo, Facebook Messenger and Skype among others. Most accounts are free and you can choose with whom you want to connect. Messages are exchanged between users with whom you are signed in to the programs in real time. It is sort of like a phone conversation, but via typed text instead of voice.

Adding a chat feature to your hub can increase traffic, increase engagement and potentially lead to more closings. The chat feature allows clients to contact you and ask questions about items or listings on your site.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – When you have established your buddy lists and a profile with an instant messaging platform, many will allow you to sign in on your mobile device and will keep your buddy list at your fingertips. A note of caution: staying signed in on your mobile device can be a large drain on your battery and could cause interruptions at inopportune times.

TEXT MESSAGING

Consumers consider text messaging a required form of communication. Almost every cell phone has the capability of text messaging. Messages are sent from one person to another when you have a quick message and don't want to go through email or voice conversation. Cell phone carriers have bulk plans for texting services that are more economical than the pay-as-you-go message programs.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – You can text message your clients or consumers to let them know you have a new listing on your site they might be interested in.

VIDEO CONFERENCING

What about connecting with clients who are not local? Busy schedules can also get in the way of face-to-face conversation, but you can talk via video if you have a webcam built into your computer or have an external camera. Skype, Hangouts (Google/Android) and FaceTime (iPhone/iPad) are some of the most popular instant video chat applications, or you can send a one-way video message with www.Eyejot.com.

RSS FEEDS

RSS stands for “Really Simple Syndication” and is a way to easily share blog entries. RSS feeds can be easily created for your blog. This enables software such as newsreaders to download your content (text, images, audio or video) automatically every time you publish. Make sure visitors can subscribe to your blog via email, through an RSS feed or through an email subscription.

Here are some resources for setting up email and RSS subscription services:

- FeedBurner <http://feedburner.google.com>
- FeedBlitz™ <http://www.feedblitz.com>

➔ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Review your website and test adding a subscription feature to see how many subscribers you get.



ONLINE MARKETING TOOLS

e-NEWSLETTERS

An e-newsletter is a digital marketing vehicle that is growing in popularity among agents looking to connect with clients on a consistent basis without forced one-on-one contact or follow-up.

If you're worried you don't have enough online experience to create an effective email newsletter, you have the ability to choose from a range of products. Some are turnkey, so you just pick the campaign, add the clients and the system does it for you. Some allow you to personalize copy. Some don't. Review a couple of options and see what works for you. By adding copy, you have the ability to add your own personality, knowledge and information so the consumer can get to know you through your newsletter.

Your e-newsletter should be set up to go out on a consistent basis. The goal is to have clients who anticipate and read your newsletter every month consistently. Sending your newsletter monthly is a good rule of thumb. Always ask permission before you start sending the email, and ask clients to subscribe to your e-newsletter by placing an icon or area on your site dedicated to this medium.

Make sure the newsletter product you choose allows you to:

- Manage subscriptions automatically
- Unsubscribe to features
- Utilize data and analytics to see who is reading your newsletter
- Use templates to create a professional-looking product

Some suggested content includes:

- Community updates highlighting new and local businesses, real estate news, your recent blog post and market updates
- Quarterly or monthly market updates

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – You can visit NAR's Research page to access the quarterly local market reports for your area at [NAR.realtor/research-and-statistics](https://www.nar.realtor/research-and-statistics).

PROTECTING YOUR EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS

Every connection you make with a consumer, including email, is an opportunity for digital marketing. You can enhance the way you employ email as an digital marketing tool by using an online email service that is in compliance with the CAN-SPAM Law and helps you monitor your marketing. Some examples include:

- [www.Mailchimp.com](https://www.mailchimp.com)
- www.iContact.com
- www.ConstantContact.com
- www.verticalresponse.com

The CAN-SPAM Law is important. CAN-SPAM stands for the “Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003” (CAN-SPAM Act) and became law in December 2003.

The Act applies to all “commercial emails” whether solicited or unsolicited. Commercial emails are defined as “any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service.” The act requires senders of commercial emails to include the following information in every message:

- A legitimate return email and physical postal address
- A clear and conspicuous notice of the recipient’s opportunity to decline to receive any future messages

The best way to stay in compliance with CAN-SPAM is to ask permission before emailing clients by asking them to sign up to receive communication like e-newsletters from you. Make sure you put opt-out language at the bottom of every email, allowing the client the option to be removed from your mailing list.

→ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – realtor.com® has an e-newsletter that keeps your social connections up-to-date. Use this free e-newsletter as a way to actively show you how to keep up with the real estate market. It’s loaded with news articles and national and regional real estate statistics, and it can be customized with your own editorial. It is updated each month for you to distribute with your branding and photo. Find out more at www.realtor.com/engage.

→ Happy Grasshopper® (www.HappyGrasshopper.com) is an email service that writes emails for you to choose from and will send them to your database. This is a good way to stay connected to your database and has been well received among many readers.

DRIP CAMPAIGNS

You can set up various campaigns through a “drip service” to deliver emails on a scheduled basis. Programs like Top Producer and many template sites allow you to customize a delivery campaign to buyers and sellers. Be careful not to fill inboxes with “junk” and sales emails — you can get reported as spam and, if enough people report you, it’s hard to fix.

→ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – Send regularly timed updates to clients based on economic or annualized events. Send them the quarterly local market information or information on tax issues in March.

EMAIL SIGNATURE LINES

Using email signatures is a great way to consolidate your information and be easy to reach. However, don't let your signatures get too cluttered with long links to all of your networking sites. Highlight your hub and main contact number. If you are using your signature in an email, the receiver already has your email address. You can have a separate one for communicating on your mobile phone as well. A couple of examples include:

Sally SuperAgent

Licensed Association Broker

Lovely Real Estate

Tel (401) 555-1212 | Fax (401) 555-1211

ssuperagent@lovelyre.com | www.lovelyre.com

Connect with me: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Blog](#)

Carl Connected

Licensed Association Broker

www.LovelyRealEstate.com

Phone: (401) 555-1212

Fax: (401) 555-1211

Lovely Real Estate



→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Create various length and styles of email signatures. Send them to your closest friends and family. Ask which one they think is the best.

Don't forget to also include your website in offline signatures — on your letters and in your advertisements, brochures, etc. Everywhere!

If you need to put your social media sites in print, make sure to include the whole URL. Here are some examples:

- <http://www.twitter.com/SallyAgent>
- <http://www.facebook.com/SallySuperAgent>
- <http://www.facebook.com/RealEstatePage> (For Facebook Business “Page”)
- <http://www.linkedin.com/in/sallyagent>
- <http://www.youtube.com/user/sagent>

EMAIL AUTO REPLIES

Staying in touch with clients and potential clients is key. With the speed at which we receive information online, we anticipate almost instant communication in all of our professional and personal dealings. One way to ensure you are meeting the near-instant demand for communication is by setting up auto replies to your emails. An auto reply will allow email senders to receive a confirmation that their email has been received. In addition, your email reply will have information on how best to get in touch with you and where they can go for more information.

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Set up an auto reply for your emails that tells clients how best to reach you, when they can anticipate you getting back to them and, finally, where they can go to find out more information while they wait to hear back from you.

OFFLINE MARKETING

Don't forget that you can still use your offline media to promote yourself online. Market yourself and your information by assuring that you are delivering a consistent message — even in print — by continuing to send people back online to your “e” marketing tools. As we discussed, add your website, blog address, newsletter information and a call to action to your static print items. Consider your overall marketing budget to determine if some of the dollars you spend on print advertising should be redirected to digital marketing. This will bring more traffic to your online marketing tools. You can use these static items to market your online tools:

- **Business Cards** — If you opt for a photo, please keep it current! Keep your business card as simple as possible and get as much information out there to contact you as you can without cluttering it up. Be creative.
- **Property Brochures** — Property brochures can be flyers found at your listings used to market other listings you have.
- **Signage** — Some people have put their website and their name on signage. Be sure you comply with NAR/State/Local regulations and broker policy.
- **Advertising Pieces and Flyers** — Ads should contain, and potentially highlight, your website address and single property websites.
- **Newsletter** — Whether you use a print or email newsletter, be sure it contains your website address. Consistently ask people to sign up for this newsletter.
- **Clothing** — Some agents have had T-shirts made with their website address to wear them around and to use as giveaways. This is a fun and catchy way to promote yourself offline and highlight your online presence.
- **Just Listed / Sold Cards** — Yes, these are still viable. Drive folks from your offline to online marketing via a cohesive message. You can even include the economic factors and/or the buyer/seller trends that lead to a quick sale.

 → **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** — www.Moo.com has some smaller business cards with a way to use your own photographs on one side, or use photos with permission.

MAKING THE HUB AND SPOKE CONCEPT WORK

USING LINKS TO DRIVE CONSUMERS BACK TO YOUR HUB

All the tools discussed are powerful. They can be used on their own, or shared with others in your sphere. When you have information you believe is valuable, what is the most successful way you can share it? Try creating links with the content and sending it to your client base via email or your social media networks. Here are some examples of putting this into practice:

1. Any Web address can be copied and shared on your status updates on social networks.
2. You can shorten your links using a URL shortener like www.Bit.ly allowing you to share more easily. These sites also monitor how many times people click on the link and the services are free.
3. Always include your Web address when creating a salutation, online and offline. You should include your hub's website address in all communication in which you use your name. You can do this with a simple addition of the URL address after your name, for example:
Jane Smith, REALTOR®
XYZ Realty, Inc.
<http://MYWEBSITE.com>
4. Use a signature generator to make it fancier with a banner or photo that includes your URL address. Be careful with some of the email signatures that give too many sites to click on. People don't have time to visit them all. Make it one link — your hub.
5. Don't forget to include your hub's website address in your Bio/Profiles on all social networks you belong to.

ADVERTISING ONLINE

There are many ways to advertise and market yourself online. Below are a few of those items:

- Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Banner Advertising
- Featured Listings
- Facebook Ads

WHAT IS SEM / SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING?

SEM stands for “search engine marketing.” It is the process of gaining traffic from — or visibility on — search engines. SEM covers two aspects of marketing:

- Gaining traffic through paid search advertising
- Gaining traffic through organic SEO efforts

Some people consider SEM the opportunity to gain traffic solely through paid ads. Today we see there are two types of results. Your website can appear as a listing on a search engine without having to pay for it. That is an organic search result.

Search engines initialisms (they are pronounced one letter at a time vs. being pronounced as a word) also have paid search ads, sometimes referred to as “CPC” or “PPC” listings. Those acronyms come from the way advertisers are charged for these ads, on a Cost-Per-Click or Pay-Per-Click basis. If you pay, you get listed. When you stop paying, your listing goes away. You will notice on Google, for example, the paid listings in the “Sponsored Links” (the first two or three items that come up on a page and those that appear on the right side under the words “Sponsored Links”).

→ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Do a Google search of real estate agent and **YOURTOWN** and see what listings come up.

You may wish to devote some part of your online marketing budget to SEM, or you can focus on bringing your website up in the natural or SEO listings. To find out more about placing an ad on Google, go to the end of the Sponsored Links to the right of the page and click on the line that says “See Your Ad Here.”

SEO / SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the visibility of a website or a Web page in search engines via the “natural” or unpaid (“organic” or “algorithmic”) search results. By posting content on your website, the search engines categorize the content found on your website so it can be found when a consumer does a search online. In general, the earlier (or higher on the page) and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine. SEO may target different kinds of searches, including image search, local search, video search and industry-specific vertical search engines. This gives a website Web presence.³

In the search world, SEO is equal to PR in the “real” world. Good SEO can’t guarantee good search engine coverage, any more than good PR can guarantee a favorable newspaper article. But it can increase the odds, if done within acceptable boundaries.⁴ Keep in mind that SEO is a moving target and Google, Bing, etc. can and will change their algorithms that affect your website at will. Dynamic content, however, will forever be a defining characteristic of those websites being “found” organically. Leverage that!

➔ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Here are some things you can do to increase your chances of appearing higher on a search engine search:

- Update your content frequently
- Use keywords to describe content
- Use Google’s free Adwords keyword search to see trending topics
<https://adwords.google.com/>



³ <http://www.wikipedia.com/seo>

⁴ www.searchengineland.com

BENEFITS OF ORGANIC SEO AND CONTENT ON YOUR WEBSITE

Not only will readers visit your hub because you have provided them the link to visit, but they will also find you when they are searching online using search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc. You want to be found by these users. Your name should appear within the first couple of pages, not only by searching your name, but also by searching common words/phrases, or keywords, that a consumer might search for on which you focus your content.

This is commonly referred to as building your SEO (search engine optimization). When you utilize your keywords properly, you are investing in appearing on the first page of Google or other search engines. If you are working with the same keywords as many other people, it will be more difficult to get onto the first page. Think about niches – narrow down “real estate agent in YOURTOWN” — but focus on using other keywords that buyers/sellers might search for, and work with those. Many consumers use search engines to find agents and houses. Figure out what they type into the search box and write about that! If you tend to list homes on golf courses, focus on that. Write about “living on the water” or “homes for sale on the river” or “golf courses in MYCITY.” Of course, if you do not wish to be contacted as a result of a search, don’t write about that subject. For example, if you don’t like to work on short sales, you may not want to focus your content on writing about the process of a short sale. Remember, though, that you are writing for a consumer to be able to read and relate to your content. If you “stuff” keywords into your posts, your readership will suffer.

What is your target market? Use some of your pages to be a community expert. There are hundreds of agents who will appear on the search engine pages of “Real Estate Agent in Arizona,” but how many agents will appear on Google when consumers search for “golf communities in MYCITY” or “How to buy a Foreclosure”? Write content on different subjects so that you can position yourself as an expert on those topics. Write about your community, not just real estate information. Write what you know, and what you live — it’s what differentiates you from the other agents in your area offline, as well.

Below are some topics that may be areas of interest to your community. By writing content on these topics, you’ll increase your chances of being properly indexed by the search engines. Pick one, research it and write relevant content. You can become a trusted expert.

- Restaurants, stores, parks and any local businesses
 - Write about them and they'll often become an advocate for you
- School districts, local sports teams, events, golf courses and playgrounds
- Short sale, foreclosure processes — spell out the details of the process
- Home maintenance tips, curb appeal, home decorating ideas, landscaping and staging
- Transaction process — much of what REALTORS® do post-enacted contract is a mystery. Dispel the myths.

Break down and write about the process. How many questions do you get once a client is in the back of your car? Answer them on your website.

When you are blogging you can “tag” your posts with keywords. Tags are like the index in the back of a book. Each post should have 3 – 5 tags that are relevant to your post. Try to use tags with your keyword-enriched content. If you write a post about a local school district, you may choose to tag: Town, School, Children. There is a box below or to the right of the blog post where you can enter your tags, separated by commas.

Writing content is much easier if you can rely on free content made for the real estate consumer. One way to do that is through the REALTOR® Content Resource

 (www.HouseLogic.com/Members), an exclusive, free tool for members. The more than a thousand articles at the REALTOR® Content Resource, which come from NAR's award-winning and comprehensive consumer website HouseLogic, cover not only home buying and selling, but everything homeowners need to enhance, protect and maintain their homes.

 The process to use the content is simple. When you access www.HouseLogic.com/Members, you'll be prompted to choose the article or articles you want; to select how you want to use them, such as in your blog; and to download them. With seasonal home improvement, maintenance, insurance, tax and finance content, you can not only create a year-long marketing campaign on your blog, but you can also add the articles to your website and e-newsletter, or share them via Facebook and Twitter.

Regardless of where you choose to go for content, remember to always keep it legal and do not copy and paste posts from other websites, which is a violation of copyright. (Excerpts are okay with proper attribution.) Add terms of use and other legal protections to your privacy statement on the blog. Be sure you add a disclaimer to your blog noting that you do not assume responsibility for the accuracy of information posted by your visitors. Also, as a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, remember that the Code of Ethics applies even online. For resources on blogging policy, please see references.

As part of the preamble to the Code of Ethics, the Professional Standards Committee suggests that REALTORS® can take no safer guide than that which has been handed down through the centuries and embodied in the Golden Rule, “Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

BANNER AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADS

These small rectangular advertisements appear on all sorts of Web pages and vary considerably in appearance and subject matter, but they will share a basic function: if you click on them, your Internet browser will take you to the advertiser's website. A banner ad is simply a special sort of hypertext link. The link is displayed as a box containing graphics (usually with textual elements) and sometimes animation. Banner advertising will give you an opportunity to get your name and your information in front of thousands of people at once. These ads can be targeted to the sites and interests of your clients.

Realtor.com® LocalExpertsm allows an agent to promote themselves within a specific zip code or at a city level. There are limited spots available per market. Pricing is based on market size and traffic with annual and semi-annual subscriptions available.

LocalExpertsm also includes ads that retarget home shoppers when they visit Instagram or Facebook to keep you top of mind after they have seen you on realtor.com.

Social media ads have now taken hold as a potential lead generator with many platforms such as Facebook and Twitter leading the charge. Twitter has "Sponsored Ads" a REALTOR® can buy that could drive social traffic back to your website. Facebook offers ads and/or sponsored stories on their site. They enable you to reach a very targeted audience by location, age and/or interests. They are simple image and text-based ads, which can link either to your Facebook business "Page" or to an external site like your website or blog, even a specific post. Like pay per click, you can control your budget by paying either for clicks or impressions.

For both of these platforms, specificity is key. Take note of the demographic you are targeting and shape your message to make it relevant for them. "First-time home buyer/seller info" for the younger subset and "How to buy a vacation home ..." for those older.



Best practices on working with online leads: In recent surveys it has become apparent that online search is the starting point for most consumers looking for a home. They will happily search on their own but when they get serious they will look to a real estate professional. How this first inquiry is responded to is critical and requires quick action, a professional response and in many cases persistence to seal the deal. Realtor.com has this summarized on the page www.realtor.com/convert.



Your online resume for referrals and listings: Referrals and recommendations are always going to dominate how a consumer selects a real estate professional. It is important that when someone recommends you that your real estate credentials are in order should someone be checking your references as a candidate to be their agent. If you have not taken the step of reviewing your contact information on your realtor.com profile you may be missing out. Also if you have reviews and recommendations posted on the site. See how agents are leveraging their profile to close referrals and generate listing appointments at <http://marketing.realtor.com/betterprofile-morelistings>.



Content Marketing: realtor.com® has produced tools for your use that can help you communicate with your customers. Bookmark this link to download a fresh listing presentation, update your profile or hear how other REALTORS® are using realtor.com®. Get your own free e-Housing Trends e-newsletter to send to prospective customers. As new tools and downloads become available they will be found at this link, NAR.realtor/realtor.com.



RELATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING TO THE CODE OF ETHICS

As with any online marketing, REALTORS® must keep their online presence in compliance with the REALTOR® Code of Ethics. We have included an updated version of the Code of Ethics and the articles that affect marketing online. These typically include Articles 12 and 15.

Article 12 states: “REALTORS® shall be honest and truthful in their real estate communications and shall present a true picture in their advertising, marketing and other representation. REALTORS® shall ensure that their status as real estate professionals is readily apparent in their advertising, marketing and other representations, and that the recipients of all real estate communications have been notified that those communications are from a real estate professional.”

Article 15 states: “REALTORS® shall not knowingly or recklessly make false or misleading statements about competitors, their businesses or their business practices.”

The Standard of Practice 15-2 states: “The obligation to refrain from making false or misleading statements about competitors’ businesses and competitors’ business practices includes the duty to not knowingly or recklessly repeat, retransmit, or republish false or misleading statements made by others. This duty applies whether false or misleading statements are repeated in person, in writing, by technological means (e.g., the Internet) or by any other means.”

Today’s agents should interpret the Code to apply to all types of interaction the REALTOR® may have on the Web. It remains the responsibility of the members to comply with the requirements of local, state and federal law and the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.



Whenever identification is required by this policy it must include:

- a. Name/Logo or brokerage
- b. Name of REALTOR®
- c. Name of agent responsible for the website
- d. State of licensure

Also defined by the code, websites must include:

- a. Up-to-date and current content
- b. No misuse of URLs or metatags
- c. Disclosure to consumer if you collect email addresses and sell them to vendors
- d. No disparaging comments that involve other practitioners
- e. Compliance with other rules and laws
- f. CAN-SPAM Law for email
- g. The copyright law that governs plagiarism of content



ANALYTICAL TOOLS

As you take your online marketing to the next level, truly investing into a website and your marketing efforts, you may find that your efforts are taking up more of your time, but you will also find many rewards. It's important to take a look at your campaigns and determine what is working and what isn't by analyzing the changes you make. It can be fun to see what drives more visitors to your site: is it when you post a picture or when you have an in-depth post you researched?

There are tools available to help you to obtain full tracking figures of any online marketing you utilize.

Measuring the statistics on your site is key in determining what is working and what needs to be adjusted. Google Analytics is a free platform for users from beginner to advanced levels of experience. Visit www.google.com/analytics and sign up. Once the analytics are active for a few weeks, you can start analyzing the data.

After you set up your Google Analytics account (using the tracking code Google will supply for you), it will take a few days to get some results worth reading. It is fun to watch the number of visitors grow on your site. You can customize different dates using the drop down menu of calendars at the top right. Play around with the system and take a look at the different metrics that are important to you.

Advanced users can explore the many facets of analytics by studying the various reports and options supplied. The possibilities of data reporting are huge. Some of the common things to look at are:

- **Visits** – How many people visited your site? Take a look at how many more visits were made to your site after you post a new article/page. Then compare the results to determine if the number of visitors grows based on your post.
- **Pages/Visit** – This feature determines the numbers of pages visitors are viewing after landing on the page they entered on.
- **Bounce Rate** – The percentage of initial visitors to a site who “bounce” away to a different site rather than continue on to other pages within the same site. If you have a high bounce rate, consider adjusting your content and pages to see if you can get clients to stay longer.

Further down on the “Dashboard of Analytics” are two reports that you should review:

- Traffic Sources Overview
- Content Overview

By looking at these two reports in full view, you can see the exact source of most of your visitors.

- Where did they come from?
- Did they land on your site from Facebook or from a Google Search?
- You will see what keywords they searched for when they clicked on your page.

HOW CAN YOU USE THESE TO HELP YOU?

The traffic sources report can help in many ways. Try to test different sources and test different types of pages to see where you can generate the most traffic.

- If you post the local event calendar, do you get more hits than if you post about the mortgage rates?
- If you spend a lot of time on Facebook, but you don't see the amount of traffic increasing as a result, maybe you shouldn't use the “it's helping my business” excuse for playing games anymore.
- If you are utilizing a Facebook business page, but aren't seeing a lot of traffic coming to the site from Facebook, try sharing content at different times of the day or writing more compelling descriptions of what the posts are about.
- If visitors are not spending very much time looking at certain types of posts, but lots of time on others, write more about the subjects that your readers find more engaging.



MARKETING INVENTORY ANALYSIS

Once your hub or Web presence is established, you will want to examine some of the offline and online tools you will use to bring people back to your site and, most importantly, your listings. This analysis will help you understand where you currently are and where you can go with your offline and online marketing campaigns. Follow these instructions to begin the marketing inventory analysis:

1. List the tools you are using right now in your marketing.
2. Rank the tools based on the priority of importance.
3. Take a look at the list again and determine what type of return you are getting on that marketing. Rate each item as a “High,” “Medium” or “Low” return on investment (ROI). If you do not know the ROI on something, note that for that item.
4. Examine the item’s priority compared to its ROI. Highlight any items in which the priority and investment do not match.
5. Put a flag by any items in which the priority for something is a high priority but doesn’t have a high return on investment. This is something you need to consider revising your time and/or input on or not doing at all.
6. Examine all of the items that you’ve placed as unknown or low ROI. Consider replacing any low ROI items. For any unknown items, if you can’t quantify or track it, consider replacing these items as well.
7. Review the digital marketing strategies you’ve learned about in this guide and list at least three items that you will consider using to replace low returning ones, or new items that you will simply add to your marketing mix.
8. Re-evaluate your marketing strategy every quarter and try to replace low ROI items with higher ROI items. Use analytics to track your results and ensure that you are constantly trying new ways to market yourself and your business.

Ask yourself these questions while you go through this exercise:

- Which tools should you discontinue?
- Which ones should you continue using?
- Which new tools could you now include in your marketing?
- Which tools should you spend more time on?

It is important to note, as much as we talk about the importance of digital marketing, to remember to keep doing things that have been working for you offline. Figure out ways to meld the two together.

TAKING IT OFFLINE

Are you interested in learning more about digital marketing, technology and how to use it? We recommend you take NAR'S e-PRO® certification, which raises the bar for REALTORS® in social media and technical expertise. The evolved e-PRO® certification provides a roadmap to help you serve hyper-connected consumers of today and tomorrow. Course topics for Day 1 (live or online) include the changing market, how to connect with consumers, the online conversation and reputation management. Day 2 (online only) provides hands-on discovery of business tech tools such as an e-strategy, mobile office, micro-blogging, rich media and NAR resources.

↓ For more information, visit <http://www.epronar.com> or email www.ePRO@REALTORS.org.

↓ You can find videos on topics discussed in this product at www.NAR.realtor/SMRTips.

This guide was originally created for REALTORS® by social media expert Amy Chorew, with assistance from Kim Wood at TechByte. It is maintained by NAR social media expert Nobu Hata, Director, Industry Outreach and Engagement Strategy and Colleen Doyle, Director of Strategic Initiatives.



NAR RESOURCES

- e-PRO® Certification <http://www.epronar.com> or email epro@Realtors.org
- REALTOR® Content Resource www.houselogic.com/members
- realtor.com® Social Tools www.NAR.realtor/realtorcom
- REALTOR Benefits® Program Partner Offers www.NAR.realtor/RealtorBenefits
- Adwerx NAR.realtor/RealtorBenefits/Adwerx
- Back At You NAR.realtor/RealtorBenefits/BackAtYou
- Placester NAR.realtor/RealtorBenefits/Placester
- *Social Media for REALTORS® Series* www.Store.realtor/SMR
- Use of Social Media in the Real Estate in Business
http://www.NAR.realtor/letterlw.nsf/pages/0510rm_socialmedia
- 2019 Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice
<http://www.NAR.realtor/governance/governing-documents/the-code-of-ethics>
- *2018 NAR Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers*
<https://store.realtor.org/product/report/2018-profile-home-buyers-and-sellers-download?sku=E186-45-18>
- *2019 NAR Member Profile*
<https://store.realtor.org/product/report/2019-member-profile-download>
- Field Guide to Effective Online Marketing
<https://www.NAR.realtor/field-guides/field-guide-to-effective-online-marketing>
- .realtor™ and .realestate domains
www.get.realtor
<https://www.get.realtor/benefits#market-your-brand>

Social Media Network Help

- Google Video www.google.com/profiles
- Facebook Video <http://www.facebook.com/help/>
- LinkedIn <http://learn.linkedin.com/>
- Twitter <http://support.twitter.com/>

- Foursquare <http://support.foursquare.com/home>
- Flickr <http://www.flickr.com/about/>
- YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/t/about>

Social Media Management Platforms

- Hootsuite Video www.Hootsuite.com
- TweetDeck www.Tweetdeck.com

Listing Syndication Sites

- realtor.com
- www.trulia.com
- www.zillow.com
- www.RealEstateShows.com
- www.point2agent.com
- www.vFlyer.com

Single Listing Websites

- Single Property Sites <http://www.singlepropertysites.com>
- My Single Property Websites <http://mysinglepropertywebsites.com>
- eProperty Sites <http://www.epropertysites.com/>

Email Communication Tools

- MailChimp www.Mailchimp.com
- iContact www.icontact.com
- Constant Contact www.ConstantContact.com
- AWeber Communications www.AWeber.com
- CAN-SPAM Rules <http://www.ftc.gov/spam/>

Mobile Media Tools

- Mobile Real Estate ID www.mobilerealestateid.com
- Facetime <http://www.apple.com/ios/facetime/>

Instant Messaging

- Live Person www.LivePerson.com
- zopim www.zopim.com

RSS Feeds

- FeedBurner <http://feedburner.google.com>
- FeedBlitz <http://www.feedblitz.com>

Video Conferencing

- Open Tok www.Tokbox.com
- Fuze Meeting www.fuzemeeting.com
- Skype Video www.Skype.com

Additional Tools

- Google Analytics www.google.com/analytics
- Podcasting www.AudioBoo.com



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