



Real Estate and the Internet.

Why do I need an internet presence? This is a question that agents asked me years ago, but I don't hear it as much any more. Times are not changing from the old way of doing Real Estate, they HAVE changed. If you are still wondering if you need a website, you might want to consider if you really understand your industry first. With a few rare exceptions, a Real Estate agent is expected to have a website as much as a phone number.

Have you ever been asked by a client for your website address? The public expects a website from the people they work with. Car Dealerships have websites, Sears has a website, Nordstrom, Taco Bell, and even "Ed", the local dry-cleaner. Why not you? The latest NAR study shows that about 65% of Realtors have a website and that number is growing fast. Don't be left out wondering where your clients went.

The latest NAR study also found that over 24% of home buyers last year (2005) FOUND THEIR OWN HOME ONLINE - THEMSELVES. That is an amazing number compared to just a few years ago. That means that the buyers found the home and then told the agent which home to go see... Why would you want them using another website to find the home? By using another website, buyers can easily contact a different agent directly.

Your job as an agent is to help people solve problems. You have an extensive understanding of Real Estate, Mortgage, Contracts, etc., you understand the trends in your area, and you are most valuable dealing with the pitfalls and obstacles faced when purchasing or selling a home. Your job is NOT to simply find them a home. They can use your help, but with the Internet, they can do a lot of the initial searching themselves (and they are already doing this!). You must embrace this change and work with the Internet to make it a reality for you and your business.

Lastly, I would like to place a quote I recently read online. I can't remember where, but it was likely to have come from inman.com, realtytimes.com, realtor.org, or many of the other real estate related sites and blogs that I try and visit regularly:

"The Internet isn't going to get rid of Realtors, but it is going to get rid of Realtors that don't use the Internet".



What should my site offer people? Basically, your site should show people LISTINGS. That is what 95% of people say they want first and foremost from a real estate site: accurate and reliable listings.

What should I want from my site? Basically, you want LEADS from your website. Anything less, and you're wasting money. You want REAL people you can contact and close the deal with, not just the number of hits your site is getting.

How do websites work and how do listings get on various sites? There are TONS of Real Estate websites out there: Realtor.com, Century21.com, Yahoo Real Estate, your company site, your own site, your competitor's sites, etc. The largest most heavily trafficked real estate website in the country is Realtor.com. It gets between 5 and 6 million viewers each month. Realtor.com also spends millions of dollars each year on advertising (which is WHY it gets so much traffic). The large branded websites (such as Century21.com, Remax.com, Coldwellbanker.com, etc.) also spend millions on advertising each year. Their target market is the entire country.

Your own company's website is a local or regional website targeting the regional market. Just as they did before the internet, your broker is advertising his/her company to a local market, and will attract buyers at the local level.

Your website is up to you. Most of my clients also advertise locally. Your website is just another means of communication between you and your clients (and potential clients). Just as your phone number is a way for people to contact you, so is your website.

Listings get on these sites in a number of ways: For the large sites, such as Realtor.com, and the branded sites, they are taken from the local MLSs and either updated each day, or less often. In some cases these sites are updated manually (people actually sit and type in the listings all by hand). Listings that are sold usually take even longer to come off of these sites.

The TrackMy.com sites are updated EACH HOUR for both active and sold listings. This makes them very reliable for your clients and they usually enjoy using these sites much more than the other sites due to their accuracy.