

SOCIAL MEDIA MAVENS


SHARE LEAD CAPTURE STRATEGIES

By Jennifer LeClaire

Finding prospects. Building relationships. Driving referrals. Social media is opening up a new world of opportunity for Internet-savvy real estate agents willing to invest a little time blogging and engaging in conversations on social networking sites.

DIGITAL FARMING ON FACEBOOK

Liz Landry, associate at the Orange Park-Jacksonville (Fla.) market center, is working her sphere and meeting new people by executing a strategy she calls “digital farming.” Reaching out to a group of people interested in a single master-planned community in Jacksonville, Landry utilizes a niche Website, a blog and a Facebook page that offers people who live there a chance to interact.



“When you look at farming, you greet people once a month. You send postcards to a specific demographic,” Landry says. “With Facebook, you can specifically target a demographic or a geographic area virtually for free and greet them daily – and it’s nonintrusive because we’re contributing useful information.”

Landry establishes her market expertise by posting videos on the Facebook page, offering tips on real estate for sale, open houses and special events in the community. This strategy allows her to put her brand in front of prospects 365 days a year without increasing her advertising budget. With social media, the messages also have the potential to spread across the wider Facebook community with a single click.

“My blog is all about real estate, but with Facebook we’re 80 percent community and 20 percent real estate.”

Landry figures she closes two or three deals a month, on average, through her social media efforts, but she is betting the cumulative effect of the relationship building has an even greater impact that can’t be measured.

MAKING PROFITABLE CONNECTIONS


Sue Adler, an associate at the Summit (N.J.) market center, is a model for quick video marketing on Facebook. She has created videos about the towns she serves, as well as client testimonials, and posted them to neighborhood pages. She also “tagged” the videos with the names of the people who were featured. The campaign went viral across the social media platform, showing up on YouTube, Google search and Facebook.

“I have more than 2,500 friends on Facebook, but I’ve separated potential clients and clients into one category and my high school friends and family into another category and other REALTORS® into a separate category.”

Adler frequently congratulates people who post about their new baby, for example, because she realizes social networking is about building relationships - not about selling houses. If you build the relationship, she says, your Facebook friends will turn to you when they are ready to shop or sell a house.

Adler’s strategy is working. During the past year, she can trace 20 closings to REALTOR® referrals through Facebook.

BETTING ON NICHE BLOGS



Mariana Wagner, an associate in the Colorado Springs South market center, says 100 percent of her new, nonrepeat, nonreferral business is stemming from her online efforts – and as much as 90 percent is directly related to her blog. Wagner also reports getting one or two deals every month from Facebook and Twitter.

“With Twitter, it’s not about posting new listings. That’s not what gets the business,” Wagner says. “My interaction on Twitter – my caring about what other people are doing and interacting with them – that’s what gets us referrals. It’s the same with Facebook. You can get into trouble being all business, all the time.”

By contrast, Wagner is die-hard real estate on her blog. It’s all real estate, all the time. That’s because, as she sees it, if someone is searching about real estate and they land on her blog, they don’t want to hear about her dog.

Wagner says there is still room to grow her efforts in social media. “I could be maximizing some of my Facebook fan pages better by making them more community oriented rather than just advertising billboards,” she says. “We’ve dominated in some niche markets, and I think we can reach out and dominate a few more. So it’s not so much doing new things, it’s just doing what we’ve been doing at a greater level.” kw

