GRI 406:

Tips, Tools and Technologies for Your Business

(Student)

EXCEL
COACHING
NETWORK

Tips, Tools and Technologies for Your Business

Copyright (c) 2019 **by Kristy Hairston**

Content

TREEF

TENNESSEE REAL ESTATE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

TECH + YOU

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Understand how technology continues to transform our world
2. Discover the massive amounts being invested into applying technology in the real estate industry

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Complete " Where Did My Business Come From?" Activity
2. Schedule monthly "Tech Tool Review"

Technology continues to impact the way Realtors practice real estate. You are constantly making tweaks to your tools, systems and software to build your business and serve your clients more efficiently.

Consider the effect that changes in technology have had on business and life over the past 10 years alone:

- **Google Chrome** — Chrome was first released in beta version on September 2, 2008 and was later released to the public on December 11, 2008. Today, Google Chrome is the most popular and widely used web browser in the world, with 67% of people choosing Chrome over the competitors (Firefox - 11%, Internet Explorer - 7%, Safari - 5%).

- **Google Maps** — Instead of downloading and installing firmware updates featuring new maps, or CDs with navigation data, we now get instant navigation and traffic updates wirelessly over a mobile internet connection.

- **AirBNB** — Two roommates executed an idea that has completely upended the hotel industry and had major ripple effects for homeowners and real estate investors. AirBNB had more than $2.6 billion in revenue in 2018.

- **Social Networks** — Today's social media networks are where people go to connect with friends, to get referrals for service providers and to be entertained. Worldwide, Facebook has more than 2.27 billion monthly active users (MAUs) each month with YouTube (1.9 billion MAUs) and Instagram (1 billion MAUs) also commanding huge audiences.

- **AI** — From "Siri" to self-driving cars, artificial intelligence is already changing the world and with hundreds of millions of dollars being invested each year into developing AI tools specifically targeted towards real estate, be on the lookout for AI tools to target online advertising to likely buyers or to guide investors to the houses and neighborhoods that will make for the most profitable opportunities.

- **Netflix** — Streaming giant, Netflix, has over 148 million streaming subscribers worldwide and only 40% of them are in the United States, demonstrating the global reach of the platform. Netflix is a product of the times we live in when curated content delivered to niche audiences is king.

- **Amazon** — The e-commerce juggernaut continues to diversify from its core business of delivering whatever you want as quickly and inexpensively as possible into original TV content, music distribution, online storage, digital advertising and more.

Consider these technology tools that didn't exist one decade ago:

- **The iPad (introduced Jan 2010)** — Over 350 million iPads sold since 2010
- **Spotify (introduced October 2008)** — Over 180 million monthly active users
- **Square (introduced October 2010)** — More than $2.2 billion in total revenue
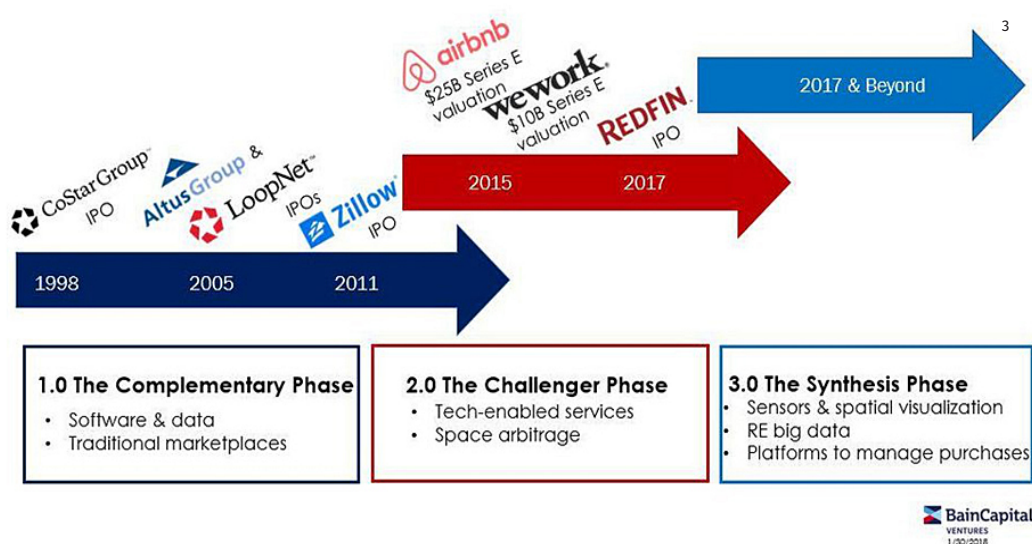
Technological advances are here to stay and the amount of money that is being invested into the real estate industry is unprecedented. In 2008, businesses in the US real estate tech space brought in about $41 million in seven deals. Compare that to what Forbes reported in 2018, "In 2017, venture investors deployed over $5 billion in real estate technology, more than 150 times the $33 million invested in 2010." [1]

Why is so much money being invested into real estate industry?

Real estate is the largest asset class in the world. It makes up over 13% of the US GDP and the housing market alone is valued at a cumulative $35 trillion.[2] Real estate touches where every person lives, works and plays. The technology space has been widely untouched since development of MLS. However, there is massive opportunity for growth as consumers continue to demand efficiencies and speed.

Real estate investors have created some of the world's most intriguing companies including LoopNet, Zillow, AirBNB, WeWork and Redfin. The outline below shows the advances in technology since 1998. Bain Capital Ventures classifies the timeline in three phases:

- **Real Estate 1.0:** The Complementary Phase — Technology companies emerged in commercial real estate (CoStar & LoopNet), asset management software (Argus) and traditional tech marketplaces (Zillow and Trulia).

- **Real Estate 2.0:** The Challenger Phase — Entry of tech enabled services and space arbitrage. Space arbitrage businesses attempt to create value to customers by offering existing physical space for a different use than the owner originally intended or for a shorter time period (ex. AirBNB and WeWork).

- **Real Estate 3.0:** The Synthesis Phase — This phase is yet to be determined on how it will play out. The likely themes of this phase are around Big Data and AI (artificial intelligence).

---

[1] Forbes.com: https://www.forbes.com/sites/valleyvoices/2018/02/13/future-of-real-estate-tech/#3fb33dc41c13)

[2] IBIS World Industry Reports

Big data, AI and Machine Learning

AI: sometimes called machine intelligence, is intelligence demonstrated by machines, in contrast to natural intelligence. Merriam Webster defines artificial intelligence as:

1. A branch of computer science dealing with the simulation of intelligent behavior in computers.

2. The capability of a machine to imitate intelligent human behavior.

It is the ability of a digital computer or computer controlled robot to perform tasks, perceive the environment and take actions that maximize its chance of successfully achieving its goals.

Big data, AI and machine learning are most effective when they work together because AI can be used to process the data through the process of machine learning, identifying new patterns that we might not have seen before. For example, the use of these technologies can take the customer information you have in your database, aggregate the data and tailor messages to them based on what communication or marketing has worked well for others.

The data, and the ability to understand it, is the key to understanding all of the future possibilities within the real estate industry. Unknown possibilities lead to the uncertainty around the age-old debate of which role today's real estate agent will play with consumers.

Will you be an integral part of the relationship or take a backseat to emerging technologies? In 2016, Inman hosted a broker vs bot challenge to identify which was better at predicting buyer preferences. The challenge paired a different Denver-area broker versus a bot for three days with the task of choosing the best home based on the buyers' preferences each day. The bot won at picking the buyer's favorite home all three days.

This challenge sparked much debate on what position the agent plays in the home buying process. Some felt that the article unjustly positioned the agent as out of touch, while others thought it proved that finding a home is not the main value of an agent and was okay to be performed by a machine. This is the question many are attempting to answer during this decade.

Think Like an Investor

With the rapid introduction, innovation and demise of some companies, thinking like an investor is more important than ever. As an investor, you have to determine which companies you are going to work with that can provide you the most efficiencies and return on investment. How do we determine our return on investment?

In order to determine what systems we are investing in that are bringing us the best return, we have to create a list of where our business came from this year or last year (see Appendix - ROI Summary):

---

[3] **Ideas from Bain Capital Ventures:** https://medium.com/ideas-from-bain-capital-ventures/the-future-of-real-estate-tech-how-we-got-here-and-whats-next-in-an-exploding-new-ecosystem-9ba633c36653

Action Item #1:

Where Did My Business Come From?

Step 1: Pull a list of your transactions over the last 12 months

Step 2: Categorize each transaction using the chart below.

Step 3: Complete the chart below.

Source of Business	Number of Pending/Closed Transactions
Past Clients/Repeat Business	_____
Past Clients/Referral Business	_____
Developments/Builders	_____
Sphere of Influence	_____
Sphere of Influence/ Referral Business	_____
Just Listed/Just Sold	_____
Farming	_____
Newsletter/30 Day Message	_____
FSBO/Expireds	_____
Sign Call	_____
Internet/Website (Personal)	_____
Walk-ins/Floor Duty	_____
Agent Referral	_____
Online Mktg (Zillow/Trulia/ Realtor.com/etc)	_____
YourWebsite.com	_____
Social Media	_____
Other:	_____
	_____

> *Technology is a tool that can help you be more efficient in your "on your business and in your business" time.*

Once you have reviewed where your business is coming from, take your top 3-5 areas, determine how much money you made in those areas and then divide it by what you spent to acquire the business. Here's an example:

Referrals	$43,000/$12,000 (cost)	= $3.58 net profit per dollar spent
Website Leads	$23,000/$6,000 (cost)	= $3.83 net profit per dollar spent
Postcard Mailing/Farming	$8,000/$6,000 (cost)	= $1.33 net profit per dollar spent
Magazine Ads	$6,000/$7500 (cost)	= .80 cent Loss for every dollar spent

Now you can use real data to determine where you should invest your money and time going forward. Which were your most profitable activities?

On your Business, Not in Your Business

Taking time to focus on the metrics of your business has been coined, "working on your business, not in your business." It's the idea of knowing why you're doing the activities you're doing and what the outcomes of those activities are. Knowing this information will allow you to spend more time and energy working in your business in the most efficient and profitable way.

Technology is a tool that can help you be more efficient in your "on your business and in your business" time. Whether you're a tech newbie or a digital ninja, this class will help you identify technology tools you can use to increase your productivity and profitability.

Before we get into the tech tools you need to know about now, let's first identify which tools are right for you. That starts with knowing yourself and what you want to accomplish. For example, if the thought of a spreadsheet makes you want to throw your computer out of the window, using Smartsheets, Google Sheets or other sheet-type tech is probably not the right solution for you. During this class, as you review different tools, consider how you normally work and choose the tool that is right for you. If there is a tool that interests you, see if the tool offers a 30-day free trial and try it for a few weeks. If it doesn't work, cancel it immediately and move on to the next.

Action Item #2:

Schedule Your Monthly Tech Tool Review

Finding the right tool for you can take time. A tech tool review allows you to keep your apps and tech tools up to date. Perhaps you downloaded an app or registered for a free trial of a tech tool and you haven't used it in months or years. It's time to clean the clutter. Take a moment with a partner at your table to review the apps on your phone, identify the ones that you haven't used in months or years and answer these questions:

- What was the app supposed to help you do?

- Do you have any other app that also does that function or helps with that issue?

If you have more than one app that's similar, do you need both of them? If you only have the one that you are not using, do you still need it? If not, delete it. If deleting them is too hard for you, consider adding a folder and putting all unused apps in that folder. Go through this exercise with each of the apps you identified and have your partner do the same. This is your first tech tool review.

Take out your calendar now and schedule time for a tech tool review each month to stay ahead of the trends. Make a goal to add or replace one new piece of technology each year or as often as you need.

TECH + YOUR BUDGET

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Learn how to set up and track your annual marketing budget
2. Identify your key business levers
3. Learn how to calculate the net profit per dollar for your various marketing tools
4. Learn what to look for in a CRM
5. Learn what to look for in a business website
6. Learn what to look for in a computer/tablet

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Complete "My Real Estate App Audit" activity
2. Complete "Setting Your Marketing Budget" activity
3. Complete "Identify Your Business Levers & Opportunities" activity
4. Complete Case Study #1
5. Complete "Evaluating Your Website's Performance" activity

One of the most important tech decisions you have to make is choosing which technology tools are right for you. Statista.com reports that, as of the third quarter of 2018, there were about 2.1 million apps for consumers to choose from in Google Play store and over 2 million in Apple's App Store. [1] So, if picking out the right apps seems to be a challenge, you're not alone. There were more than 197 billion app downloads in 2017 yet the average person only uses 9 apps per day and 30 apps in a month.
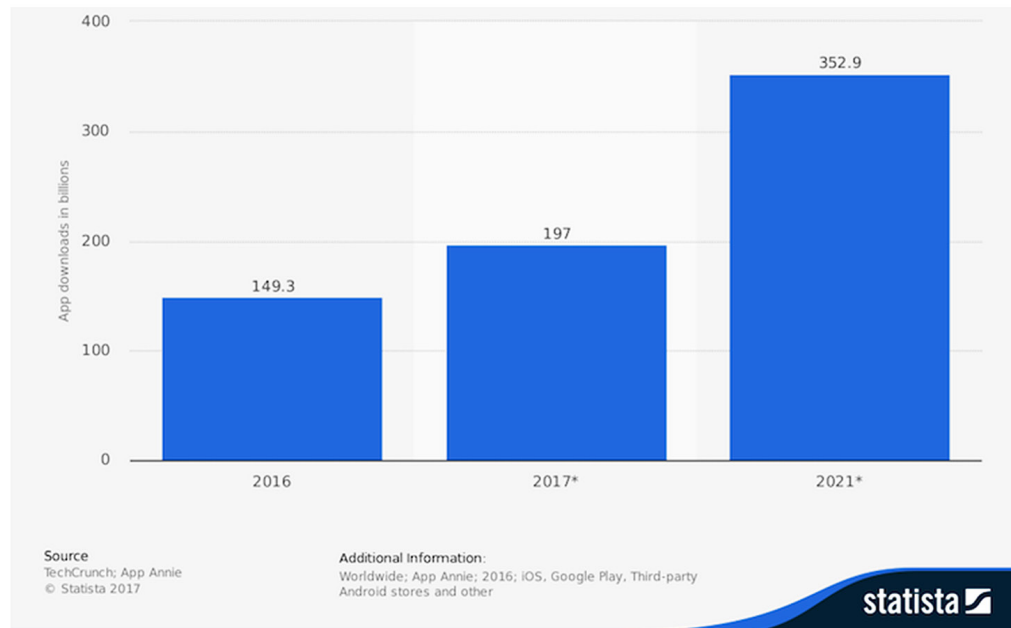
The rise of mobile app downloads has increased significantly year over year.

Action Item #1:

My Real Estate App Audit

What about you? How many apps do you have on your phone for real estate? Which apps do you use everyday? Tally up your total and share in groups of 2 to 4. Later, we will see how you compare to the national average.

    a. # of Real Estate Apps on My Phone:

    b. Top 5 Apps I Use Every Day in my Business:

        1. _____

        2. _____

        3. _____

        4. _____

        5. _____

    c. Share your results in your group. Take note of apps that others are using that may be helpful.

---

[1] Statista: https://www.statista.com/statistics/276623/number-of-apps-available-in-leading-app-stores/

Avoiding Tech Bulge

It's never been easier to download new apps or launch trial memberships to experiment with new tech tools online. This makes it easy to be quickly weighed down with tech bulge. One of the ways to trim that bulge is by developing a tech budget and roadmap. Let's start with your budget.

Action Item #2:

Setting Your Marketing Budget

Your tech tools are one part of your overall marketing budget. According to Homesnap, "most advisors say agents should spend at least 10% of their commission on marketing."[2] If 10% is a rule of thumb, let's see how your marketing budget compares.

1. Gross Income in the Last 12 Months: $ _____
2. Amount I Spent on Marketing in the 12 Months: $ _____
3. 10% of the Last Year's Gross Income (Line 1): $ _____
   (My Goal Marketing Budget)
4. State the Amount you Were Over/Under
   the 10% Goal: $ _____

Analyzing Current Business Levers & Forecasting Projected Trends

A business lever is an activity or source of business that you can impact through effort or spending. A business lever could be as simple as scheduled coffees with people in your sphere of influence, or mailers to a specific neighborhood, or Facebook ads, or your podcast or online advertising at a particular website. As you can see, the possibilities are only limited by your time, creativity and budget. Learning which levers to pull to bring in the right kind of business is key to managing your tech tools budget.

Action Item #3:

Identify Your Levers & Opportunities

1. What were your top 3 business levers in the last year:

   1. _____
      _____
   2. _____
      _____
   3. _____
      _____

[2] 5 Steps to 2019 Marketing budget: https://blog.homesnap.com/hpp-5-steps-for-planning-your-2019-real-estate-marketing-budget/

2. What trends are you seeing that could drive new business for you in the next 12 months?

_____

_____

_____

3. What changes in your personnel, processes and tools can you implement to take full advantage of the upcoming trends you identified?

- Personnel:

_____

- Process:

_____

- Tools:

_____

4. What adjustments (if any) do you need to make to your marketing budget based on these findings? Make sure you have amply funded your top levers.

_____

_____

_____

Track ROI on Marketing Avenues

Keeping track of your overall marketing budget will help you make educated decisions to maximize your return on investment and grow your business. List each of the various marketing avenues you utilize in your business on a spreadsheet and monitor your expenses to ensure that you have allocated the right amount of money to support your most important business levers.

Tracking your monthly and quarterly expenses will help you to a.) determine whether you're spending more or less than the recommended 10% of gross income on marketing and b.) calculate your true return on investment for each marketing activity.

_____

MASTER MARKETING BUDGET

Fill in your **projected expenses** here. (Those "$80" entries are placeholders.)

Fill in your **actual expenses** here. (Those "$120" entries are placeholders.)

	Jan-19		Jan-19		Jan-19		Q1		
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Amount Left
Buyer Leads	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Seller Leads	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Retargeting (Tag Marketing)	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Parkbench (optional)	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Past Clients Gifts & Appreciation	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Social Media	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Open Houses	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
SEO	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Photography & Videography	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
SOI Investments	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Billboards & Bus Benches	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Print Marketing	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Advertising for Client's Homes	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Blogging & Content Creation	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
Other	80.00	120.00	100.00	150.00	100.00	150.00	280.00	420.00	-140.00
TOTAL	$1,200.00	$1,800.00	$1,500.00	$2,250.00	$1,500.00	$2,250.00	$4,200.00	$6,300.00	-$2,100.00

Your **monthly totals** will automatically populate here.

Case Study: One of Sally's business levers is seller lead advertising that costs her $325 per month. In the first quarter, Sally had one closing from this source that yielded $6,000 in commission.

    a. What is Sally's net profit per dollar spent that quarter?

    b. What is Sally's net profit per dollar for the year if Sally has no additional closings from that source that year?

3 Must-Have Tech Tools

In order to determine which tech tools make sense for your business, we must take an audit of the tools that you absolutely need to run your business. First let's examine your database tool:

#1: Customer Database/CRM (Customer Relationship Manager) Software

CRM Essentials

Consistent communication with customers and clients is the key to keeping current clients happy and getting repeat business. Choosing the best CRM platform can be time intensive and the costs for various CRMs can vary greatly. Pick the tool that you are going to use consistently. In making your selection consider these factors:

1. **Goals:** The first step in picking the right CRM is knowing exactly what you want the CRM to accomplish and which features are most important to you. It is also critical that you pick the CRM that you will actually use, not necessarily the one with the most bells and whistles. See the Appendix for a list of popular CRMs.

2. **Mobility:** Every CRM in today's technologically advanced world should be completely mobile with an accompanying app for efficiency. You should be able to make a call, send a text, and update notes on their mobile app and that action be recorded in that contact's activity tracker.

3. **Ability to Integrate:** The ability to integrate with other third party software providers is a necessity. Some CRMs integrate with software like Mailchimp, lead generating sites, email providers and more. The proper term for this functionality is "open API," which describes that an app has an "application programming interface" (API). This allows developers of other software to write code to facilitate deeper integration of your tools.

4. **Notifications & Automation:** Your CRM should notify you of actions it has taken and actions that you need to take. Automation is a great way to stay in contact with your database. Using technology to help you stay connected is a powerful way to move your business forward.

5. **Tech Support:** Importing and exporting is a great feature, but it doesn't always go as smoothly as it should. Tech support can help make importing an easy process. Does the CRM you are considering provide training webinars to maximize your use of the product? Is tech support available for calls or chatbot only?

Having a database is essential, but if you're not working in your database daily, your engine is out of oil. Sometimes, the reason you don't use your CRM is that your current CRM does not fit your needs. Let's take a look!

Your CRM Audit

Using the analysis tool below, see how your current CRM stacks up. If your CRM doesn't meet your basic needs, it won't be a long-term fit.

Put a checkmark underneath each CRM need you have.

	Includes Mobile App	Includes customer-facing website	Includes Social Media profiles of contacts	Open API (allows integrations i.e. Mailchimp, Google Drive)	Includes Mobile/ Tech Support	Easy sharing of contacts with team members/ Multiple users
Your current CRM						
Your ideal CRM	X	X	X	X	X	X

Now that you've determined your needs, you're ready to evaluate functionality and pricing.

Evaluating Functionality and Pricing

There are too many CRMs to name, however, here are some of the top CRM's used by Realtors across the country.

They are ranked here by level of customization:

Level 1:   Plug & Play implementation, Less customization needed.

Level 2:   More sophisticated customization available, Some customization needed.

Level 3:   Ability for full customization and more sophisticated integration of other apps

> *The first step in picking the right CRM is knowing exactly what you want the CRM to accomplish and which features are most important to you.*

Those who are more "tech-savvy" will enjoy tinkering with each element of design and functionality available on the Level 3 platforms while others looking for a solution that they can run as-is will be more interested in the Level 1 solutions. Note: The level of customization available does not dictate how useful or powerful the CRM may be—it is only added to help you select the option that might be right for you.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Realty Juggler Easy-to-use platform allows you to quickly add contacts, setup automatic campaigns, send marketing pieces and get automatic reminders. You can test drive this CRM for a 90-day free trial. The annual cost is $179.	**Follow-Up Boss** From solo agents to teams, system designed to manage the lifecycle of the relationship from new lead to past client. Team pricing starts at $149/month.	**Realvolve** Software complete with contact and transaction management and connectivity with other apps. Pricing starts at $49 monthly up to $233 a month.
Wise Agent Provides features without added layers of complexity. 30-day free trial. $29/month, per user.	**Freshsales/Freshworks** Track leads, monitor progress of sales funnels, sale reporting and customization options. Pricing from $12-$79 per month	**Contactually** Contactually helps to manage your online relationship for you. Contact buckets remind you when it's time to connect with your database. Pricing starts at $59 a month.
Other Options: Ixact Insightly	**Other Options:** RealSpace Top Producer	**Other Options:** Firepoint Chime Podio

#2: Business Website

The importance of targeting customers on their mobile devices has been discussed throughout the years. The question is not "if" it should be done, but "how" it should be done. Three of the most popular options are a responsive website, a native app or a progressive web app (PWA).

Responsive Website

Responsive websites use web design that converts web pages into optimal reading and navigation sizes for various mobile devices. They are easy to use, but tend to be less pleasant in terms of customer experience.

Native App

Native Apps are smartphone apps coded in a specific programing language such as iOS or Android. Native apps provide great user experience, but are limited to certain devices and require download, which causes high barriers of adoption by potential customers.

Progressive Web App (PWA)

Progressive Web Apps are web applications that load like regular web pages or websites but offer functionality such as working offline, push notifications and device hardware access traditionally available only to native applications. In the simplest sense, it's a mobile app delivered through the web without downloading from the app store. Popular examples include Twitter.com, Forbes.com and Pinterest.com.

Recent research from TechCrunch[3] , suggests that people are turning away from apps, as the majority of consumers download zero apps per month. If you haven't migrated to a responsive website or a native app, now is a good time to have a discussion with your web developer. Using a PWA will replace company's mobile sites, native apps and soon desktop sites. PWA's are a mobile-first approach to connecting with potential customers. Talk to your web developer about your website options.

If you've already developed a native app, consider spending some of your marketing budget on pay-per-click marketing to drive traffic to your app. According to Google, "discovery through a search engine is especially prevalent for local apps, tech and travel categories. In these categories, people are 26% (local), 59% (tech) and 30% (travel) more likely than the average to use search to find the apps they seek." [4]
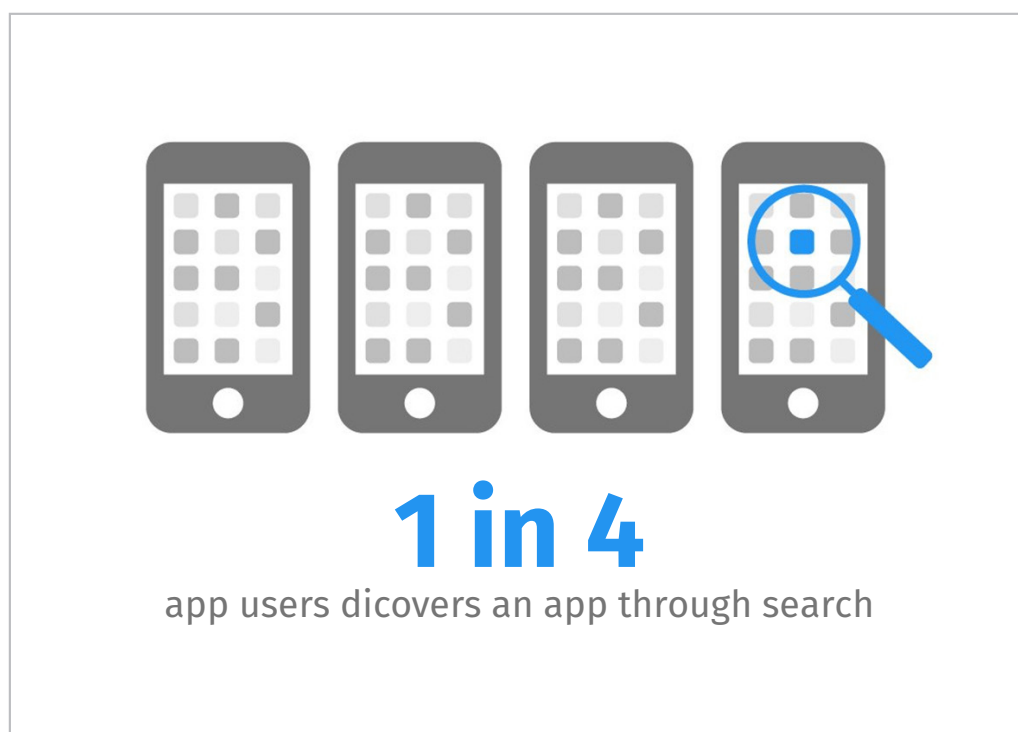

1 in 4
app users dicovers an app through search

[3] Majority of U.S. consumers still download zero apps per month: https://techcrunch.com/2017/08/25/majority-of-u-s-consumers-still-download-zero-apps-per-month-says-comscore/

[4] Mobile app marketing insights: https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/mobile-app-marketing-insights/

Action Item #4:

Evaluating Your Website's Performance

How ready is your website for today's audience? Go to www.websitegrader.com and input your website url and email address. The site will give you an overall grade on performance, mobile, seo and security. The site also has helpful articles to help you improve your existing site or you can pay them to help you develop a more robust site for a better customer experience.
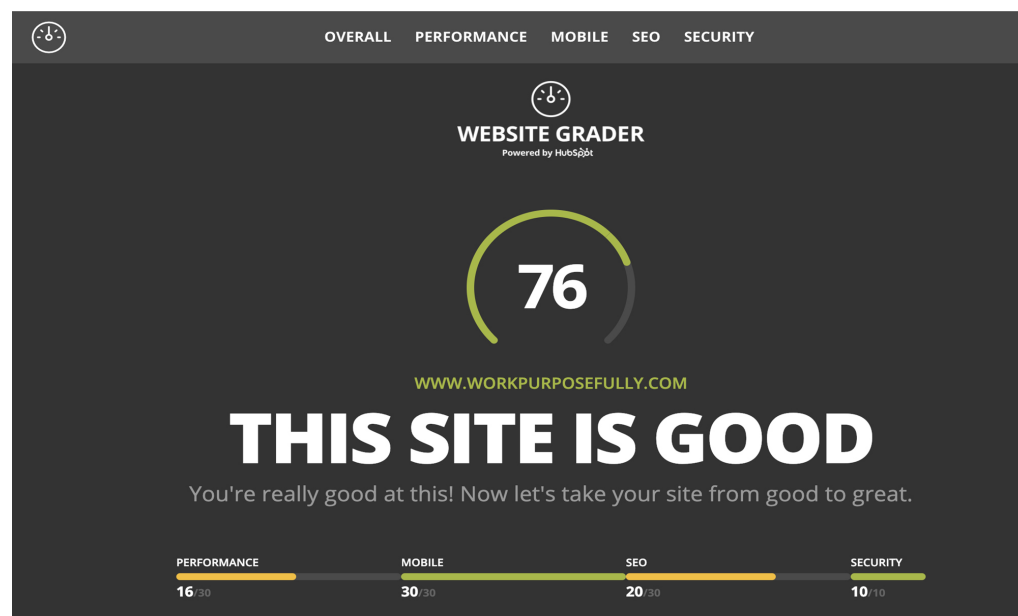
#3: Computer/Tablet

Having the right hardware is critical to helping you craft just the right customer experience so see your computer, laptop or tablet as an investment in your productivity. Having an efficient machine will help your overall productivity. If your computer loads slowly, has a slow processor or just doesn't work, it's time to purchase a new one. Here is a list of the best computers, tablets and chromebooks in 2018 (not in any order):

Best Laptops via TechRadar [5]
1. Huawei MateBook X Pro ($1200+)
2. Dell XPS 13 ($1000)
3. Asus ZenBook Flip S UX370 ($1500+)
4. Apple MacBook Pro with Touch Bar ($1400+)
5. Microsoft Surface Laptop ($1000)

Best Chromebooks via cNET [6]
1. HP Chromebook x2 ($600)
2. Samsung Chromebook Pro ($600)
3. Google Pixelbook ($1000)
4. Acer Chromebook 15 ($368)
5. Asus Chromebook Flip ($486)

---

[5] The Best Laptop 2018: 15 Best Laptops this year: https://www.techradar.com/news/mobile-computing/laptops/best-laptops-1304361
[6] Best Chromebook for 2018: https://www.cnet.com/topics/laptops/best-laptops/best-chromebooks/

Tools for Audio Recording

Are you a podcaster or YouTube content creator? Here are the top microphone options for video recording:

Entry Level (via Wiki EZVID) [7] :

1. Shure MV 88
2. Xiaokoa M30
3. Blue Microphone Raspberry
4. Rode SmartLav+

Professional Level (via TechSmith) [8] :

1. SE Electronics SE2200a II C Large Diaphragm Cardioid Condenser Microphone
2. Audio-Technica AT875R Shotgun Condenser Microphone
3. Blue Yeti USB Microphone

---

[7] 10 Best Smartphone Mics: https://wiki.ezvid.com/best-smartphone-mics
[8] Best Microphones for Recording Video: https://www.techsmith.com/blog/what-microphone-is-best-for-recording-video/

Unit 3

TECH + ETIQUETTE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify best practices for tech etiquette
2. Identify best practices for tech safety

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Discuss tech etiquette best practices

Social networks and online apps are among today's most popular communication avenues, with over 2.7 billion people using social media each year. Social networks are a great place to build your brand and keep in touch with clients, but one misstep could turn into a meme of your mistake, shared thousands or millions of times and a possible ethical violation. It's important that you play by the rules when it comes to social media.

Rule 1: Think Twice Before You Post

If you had a dollar for every time someone said, "I didn't think he/she could see that post!" you'd be richer than Jeff Bezos! Don't assume that because you have certain permissions set that no one besides your intended audience will see your post. Your digital fingerprint lives on forever whether you want it to or not and all it takes is one fingerprint for your absent-minded joke to become the comment heard around your social media world. Be on your best behavior!

Not only are you surrounded by your peers, friends and some foes, all watching to see what you are going to do or say next, but you are also auditioning for the role of Realtor by any bystander in the audience. That's right, your post has consequences, including the potential loss of current or future business.

> *Discussion:*
>
> 1. *On a scale of 1 (not intentional at all) to 5 (very intentionally), how intentionally do you use your social media presence as a part of your real estate brand?*
>
> 2. *Based on your posts over the last 3 months, what does your social network presence communicate about your business?*

Rule 2: Spelling, Grammar & Punctuation Matter

Yes, spelling, grammar and punctuation matter—even on social media. Remember being in school, turning in a research paper and the teacher or your parent asking, "Did you review this after you wrote it?" That's the same question many of us are asking as we read social media posts online. Your proper use of spelling, grammar and punctuation show that you are intelligent, pay attention to detail and can represent yourself and your clients well. Slow down, read before you post and delete mistake-riddled posts as necessary.

> *Discussion:*
>
> 1. *On a scale of 1 (not intentional at all) to 5 (very intentionally), how intentionally do you monitor your use of spelling, grammar and punctuation?*
>
> 2. *What apps have you used to help you catch spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes?*

Rule 3: You're Either Drawing In or Driving Away

Your personal, political or professional leanings may not be shared by everyone in your network so you have to choose what to share and with whom. You certainly have a right to express yourself, however, be sure that you consider the impact your posts may have before you post.

> *Discussion:*
>
> *1. On a scale of 1 (not intentional at all) to 5 (very intentionally), how intentional are you about monitoring what you post to consider how your personal views may affect your audience?*
>
> *2. How do you manage the tension between saying anything you want on the one hand and censoring your every post on the other?*

Rule 4: Realtors Have a Code of Ethics

Article 15 of the National Association of Realtors ® Code of Ethics states,

"Realtors shall not knowingly or recklessly make false or misleading statements about other real estate professionals, their businesses, or their business practices."

Let's say you have a sticky situation with another Realtor and in a moment of rage, vent on your social network page only to later find out that you were mad based on incorrect information and have now slandered a fellow Realtor. You could be subject to disciplinary action. Before you take it social, talk with your broker first and try to handle things without going public.

> *Discussion:*
>
> *1. Have you ever had someone post something untrue about you or your business? How did you handle it?*

Rule 5: Tag Sparingly and Appropriately

You may look great in the photo, but what about everyone else? Before tagging others, ask them if it's okay. Tag people that are relevant to the post. If you want to have a little more control over the ability of others to tag you, go into your security settings in your social profiles and turn on the option to review tags before your tag posts can be placed on your page.

> *Discussion:*
>
> *1. Have you ever been tagged in a post that you didn't want to be posted on? How did you handle it?*

" *Before you take it social, talk with your broker first and try to handle things without going public.*

Rule 6: Know the Social Neighborhood

Each social profile and app has its own set of norms and unspoken rules. Viewing each one as their own neighborhood is helpful when considering what you post where. For example, LinkedIn is a professional social space. It may not be best to post the same thing on LinkedIn as you posted on Snapchat or Facebook and vice versa.

> *Discussion:*
>
> 1. *Have you ever had someone post something untrue about you or your business? How did you handle it?*

Tech + Safety

Protecting yourself and your identity online can be a challenge especially when engaging with strangers. The Federal Trade Commission estimates that as many as 9 million Americans have their identities stolen each year. In 2017, Insurance Information Institute reported that the amount of money stolen through identify fraud hit $16.8 billion. Thirty percent of U.S. consumers were notified of their exposure to a data breach last year, an increase of 12 percent from the previous year. Tennessee is ranked number 25 in the United States in identity theft with over 5,000 complaints received annually. [1]

Here are some tips to make sure you stay safe online:

1. **Guard your personal information —** Never respond to personal requests for account information online. For example, if anyone request your or your clients' social security, birthday, account password or other personal information, don't supply it in an email or text. If the request is for your client's information, forward the contact information directly to your client. If it is a request for your information, first ask if you can provide alternate information. If not, call to verify their identity and give the information needed over the phone or through a secured server. You can never be too careful.

2. **Be social, but not too social —** Be careful not to divulge too much information on social sites. Keep your birthdate, pet's name, mother's maiden name, your middle name and any other personal identifiers hidden. In the event you are a target for cyber theft, personal identifiers can be used to successfully scam you.

3. **Strengthen your passwords —** Easy to identify passwords are a cyber theft goldmine. Norton security suggests not repeating your passwords on different sites and the need to change your passwords regularly. Passwords should be complex, at least 10 letters, numbers and symbols. PC Magazine identified the best password managers for 2019: Zoho Vault, Dashlane, Sticky Password Premium and Keeper Password Manager to name a few.

4. **Keep your machines up to date:** Although computer updates seem to always come at the wrong time, it's important to run the updates when they come on your computer to stay protected.

5. **Use VPN instead of Public WiFi:** Virtual private networks are more secure than public WiFi networks, where individuals can attempt to steal your information. When you use a VPN, your online traffic is routed through an encrypted tunnel to a more protected server and hides your actual IP address. Here are a list of the best VPN's according to CNet: PureVPN, CyberGhost, NordVPN, StrongVPN, IPVanishVPN.

---

[1] Facts + Statistics: Identity theft and cybercrime - https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-identity-theft-and-cybercrime

Unit 4

TECH + COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Analyze your current communication platforms and systems.
2. Define your brand
3. Develop understanding of how to communicate with customers and clients.
4. Understand best practices for email
5. Introduction to Predictive Analytics
6. Introduction to VR and AR real estate applications
7. Identify unique advantages of video marketing
8. Identify ideal opportunities to use video chat with clients

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Defining My Why, My How, My Message
2. What Does My Marketing Say About My Brand Identity?
3. How to Create a Buyer/Seller Survey using Google Forms
4. My Communication Roadmap

Just how important is client communication? It's the difference between a client choosing you or another Realtor in town who actually communicates! We've all been there: you helped John & Sara buy a house 5 years ago and they liked you and you liked them but then, lo and behold, while searching MLS for a different client, you see that they've with John and Sara listed the house for sale with another Realtor. What gives?!

Generally, when clients have had a good experience working with you and they don't come back, its because you didn't stay top of mind and someone else's lead generation enticed your client enough to call that agent. The phone call turned into a listing appointment and *voila*—your former client is now her current client on a sell of one house and the purchase of another. This happens all too often but you can increase your client retention with regular client engagement.

The Cost of Not Communicating

According to the 2018 NAR Home Buyer and Seller Profile, 89% of buyers and 67% of sellers would use their agent again or recommend their agent to others yet only about 23% actually do.[1]

The typical reason most buyers and sellers don't use their agent again is all about communication.

Using Technology to Nurture Relationships

Leveraging technology to engage past and potential clients is critical but it's important to differentiate social media "busyness" from an intentional communication plan that actually builds your business. Posting a status update online every day is not the same as consistent, targeted messaging to everyone in your database.

Part of the fallacy of relying primarily on social media to stay in touch with your database has to do with the perception that your messages are actually being seen by your intended audience as often as you think they are. For example, in 2018, Facebook had a significant update aimed at reinforcing the platform's commitment to facilitating meaningful communication between friends and family. "You'll see less public content like posts from businesses, brands and media," Mark Zuckerberg said. "The public content you see will be held to the same standard - it should encourage meaningful interactions between people." [2]

The update changed the algorithms engagement focus to "active" engagements. The more your posts inspire discussion and generate likes or follows, the more Facebook will consider them "meaningful" and prioritize them in feeds.

With the changing algorithm rules making it harder to consistently connect with customers and clients, the focus must be on meaningful online and offline communication. There are several ways to accomplish consistent offline and online communication with clients and it begins with a plan.

---

[1] 3 Ways to Effectively Communicate with Clients: https://www.realestatemarketingdude.com/3-ways-how-to-effectively-communicate-with-clients-transaction-closes/

[2] 12 Tips on How to Work with Social Platform Algorithms to Maximize Performance: https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/12-tips-on-how-to-work-with-social-platform-algorithms-to-maximize-performa/538433/

Crafting Your Communication Strategy

#1. Define Your Brand

People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it - Simon Sinek

Every company has a brand. A "brand" is defined as the overall experience of a customer that distinguishes an organization or product from its rivals in the eyes of the customer.

Every real estate professional has a brand. The question is: Is your brand the result of deliberate choices you've made or a by-product of unrelated social media postings and disconnected online marketing?

Branding starts with a concrete focus for your business. Some people call this focus, "My Big Why" or "My USP" (Unique Selling Proposition), or "My Differentiators". Whatever you call it, you must take time to define why you do what you do and how you do what you do. These two questions are the building blocks of your unique brand.

Action Item #1:

Defining My Why, My How, My Message

Take 1 minute per question to jot down your responses to these three questions. Go for quality over quantity.

1. Here's why I do what I do in my business (Use words/phrases that describe your motivation):

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Here's how I do what I do in my business (Use words/phrases that describe your processes, values, results):

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. Here's what I would like my brand to convey? (Use words/phrases that describe what you want your client to experience when interacting with your business)

    _____

    _____

    _____

"**35%**
of senior marketing professionals believe that digital marketing will account for more than **50%** of marketing spending in 2019. [3]

[3]   Online and Offiine Marketing Together: https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/online-offiine-marketing-together

Action Item #2:
What Does My Marketing Say About My Brand Identity?

Let's see how consistently your why and your how are making it into your messaging:

1. Pull up a.) your website, b.) the social media platform you use most for communicating about your business and c.) any marketing pieces you've emailed or mailed out lately and show them to your neighbor. Take a look at his/her pieces as well.

2. Looking at your neighbors pieces, share the 2-3 major themes you glean from their brand based on those pieces and share (Stay positive. Be kind!).

    a. Major Theme #1: _____

    b. Major Theme #2: _____

Now, looking back at your answer to Action Item #1, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (excellent), how well did your unique "why" and "how" come through in the marketing pieces you've been using? Identify at least 2 simple changes you could make to make sure your messaging more accurately reflects your brand.

    a. My Assessment (Scale of 1 to 5) : _____

    b. Simple Change #1: _____

    c. Simple Change #2: _____

#2. Build an Online Communication Roadmap

Think of building your communication roadmap as a math problem:
When X happens then Y should happen next

Thinking through what happens next is essential in building your brand and your business. It's also where you can lose business if you're not intentional. According to a Harvard Business Review study, "out of 2,241 companies they measured, 24% took more than 24 hours to respond to a lead-initiated contact and 23% of the companies never responded at all." [4] When you lose leads like this, it's like flushing your marketing budget down the toilet!

Taking the time to define what happens next is what will set you apart from other Realtors and it's what ensures that every customer and client receives the same customer-focused experience. It also keeps your money out of the toilet!

---
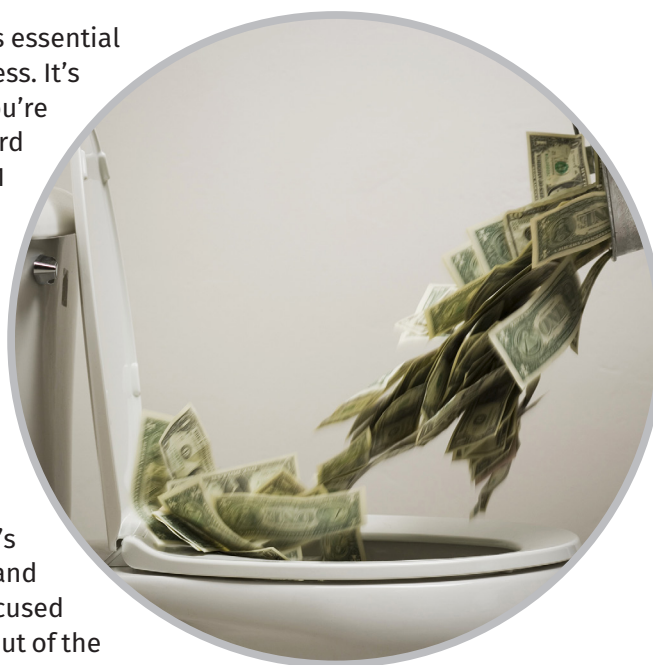
[4] Sales Follow-Up Calls and Emails: Why, When and How: https://www.tenfold.com/lead-management/sales-follow-up-calls-and-emails-why-when-and-how

Discussion: *Think of your most recent online order.*
What happened after you placed your order?

Your online ordering experience may have been great or it may need improvement. If it wasn't great, you're not alone. Harvard Business Review also reported that the biggest complaint that customers have when dealing with any business is poor follow-up. The survey found, "65 percent of customers are likely to speak negatively about their experience, and 48 percent who had negative experiences shared them with 10 or more other people." [5]

Decreasing the number of negative experiences and increasing positive online communication starts with having a plan. The pictured diagram below is an example of an online lead funnel. Every communication plan must have a plan for what happens next.

When an email lead comes in, if there is a phone number, the next step would be to call or text the lead and so on. This is especially helpful if you have a team and want everyone to do the same process. It also works well for training to have various flowcharts as a part of your team manual.

---
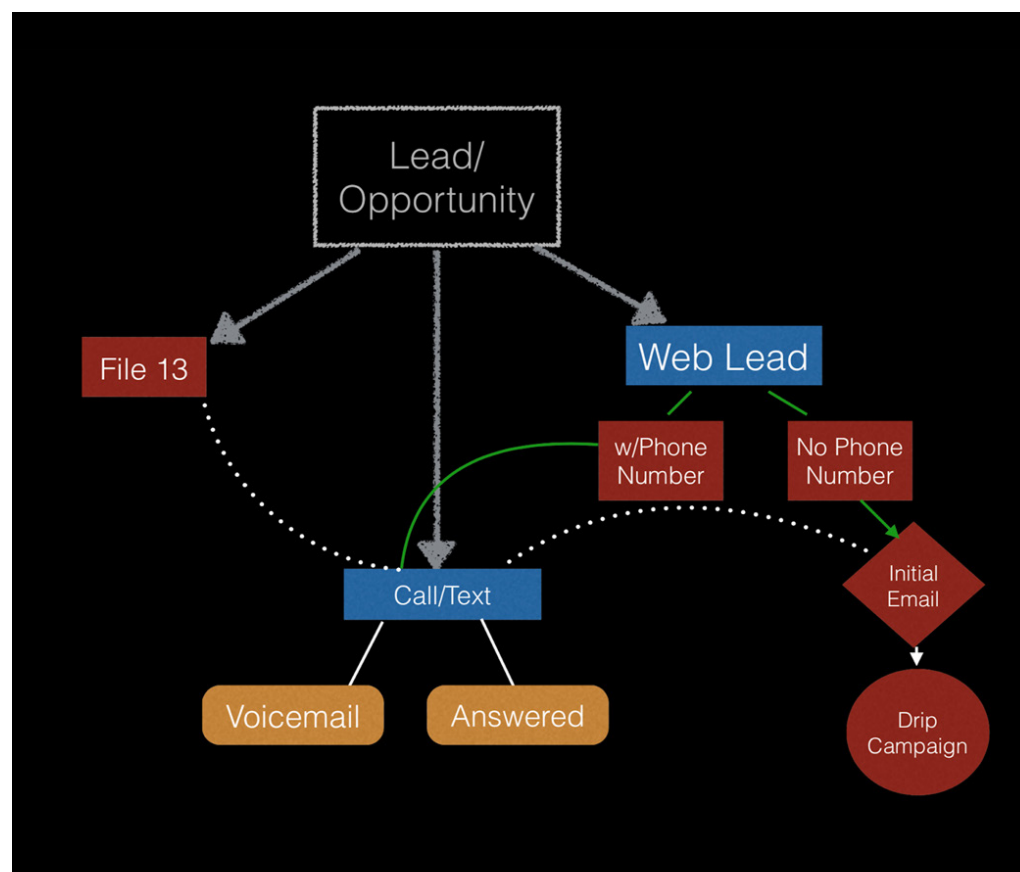
[5] How to Design a Better Customer Experience: https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/how-to-design-a-better-customer-experience

Communication Types & Tools

Whether communicating online or offline, one of your goals should be to generate repeat business from past clients and introduce your brand to new customers. To accomplish this goal, you have to pay attention to how your clients want to be communicated with, take inventory of the tools you already have and adapt to changes that technology introduces into the marketplace.

Before you craft your personalized communication roadmap, take a survey of popular communication types and tools to see what you may want to implement to best serve your audience.

Offline Communication Types

Email is ubiquitous—it's estimated that 3 out of 4 Americans send and receive email each month.[6] However, a well-rounded communication strategy has to take into account online and offline forms of communication in order to create a unified marketing strategy. For example, when a past client has a birthday, you might synchronize your efforts by sending an email, posting a social media notification and mailing a birthday card. With that kind of coverage, you're more likely to make an impression and the repetition amplifies your impact and deepens your relationships with your clients and sphere.

Pairing together online and offline activities is a must for today's integrated communication landscape. Here are other examples of synchronized online and offline marketing tools that great agent communicators are using:

- Client Event Postcard + Facebook Event + Eventbrite
- Just Sold / Listed Postcard + Just Sold / Listed Social AD + Just Sold / Listed Rider in Yard
- Thank You Card + Thank You Video Message
- Newsletter (Highlight New Restaurant) + Happy Hour at Restaurant + FB Event + Personal Postcard to VIP

Online Newsletters

Do you read online newsletters from other companies?

If you said yes, you're not alone, research suggests that you get $35 to $40 back for every dollar you invest in email marketing.[7]

Consider creating your own email newsletters using Emma, Mailchimp or Happy Grasshopper to send regular, consistent emails to your clients. The key is that the content **_must_** be good and the emails must happen on a consistent monthly basis, preferably the same day every month.

However, email marketing isn't a silver bullet. Newsletters have become unattractive to the many consumers whose email inboxes are already oversaturated with other newsletters. But email marketing is still king of digital marketing because, according to McKinsey, email is 40 times more effective at acquiring new customers than Facebook or Twitter.

---

[6] https://www.statista.com/statistics/462159/usa-email-usage-reach/
[7] The New Rules of Email Marketing: https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-new-rules/

Email marketing is a sandbox that we must get our hands dirty and play in. If you're completely appalled by the thought of it, consider blogging. Blogging is not a new concept, however, adding a blog can help with increasing your existing audience through blog subscriptions. The subscription will notify readers via email when you post new content and once they click on your post, they're back at your website. Blogging can have a similar impact as a monthly newsletter—both can be set up to be archived on your website, both can be easily shared by others on their social networks and blogs allow readers to leave comments.

If you're already blogging and sending email newsletters, you are ahead of the curve according to Smartblogger.com. The website indicated that by adding an email newsletter with your blog, you can expect a 20% higher open rate than blogging alone.[8] Blogging and email newsletters are both great ways to stay in contact with past clients and potential clients while positioning yourself as an expert in the field. Adding them both together would make you king or queen of the sandbox.

If you're having trouble knowing what information people are interested in, check out alltop.com for a snapshot of the most popular sites and articles in any genre.

Predictive Analytics

As we discussed in Unit 1, billions of dollars have been spent on real estate technology in the last decade. Some of these investments have opened the door for real estate agents to strengthen their client relationships through the use of predictive analytics, virtual reality and augmented reality. Predictive analytics uses data, statistical algorithms and machine learning to identify the likelihood of future outcomes based on historical data. It's been around for a while, and lately is starting to make a home in real estate. "The big difference now is we have new data points that we can apply to our industry. We're moving from the idea of hindsight to insight to foresight,"[9] said Dave Garland, director of Strategic Investments for NAR. Companies like Smart Zip are promising that if you purchase their product, they can provide better leads by determining who is next to move in a neighborhood.

Many suggest that predictive analytics will change the way real estate is practiced. According to RISMedia, "Predictive analytics isn't a fly-by-night fad or applicable to data enthusiast only; it can help you set yourself apart from competitors - and make you a trusted adviser to consumers."[10] It will allow you to focus your offline communication with consumers who are more likely to sell or buy within in a certain time frame. If you've been sending just sold/listed or farming postcards, perhaps you should look into companies that offer predictive software to improve your return on investment.

Companies focusing on predictive analytics:

- SmartZip.com

- Offrs.com

- Quantum Digital (Trigger Marketing) - This system is not powered by predictive analytics, but it will instantly alert you when any customer seeks property information from the postcard.

[8] Why You Shouldn't Create a Newsletter: https://smartblogger.com/create-a-newsletter/

[9] https://rismedia.com/2017/09/24/big-data-big-opportunties-how-predictive-analytics-changing-real-estate/

Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality

The Virtual Reality Society defines VR as a three-dimensional, computer generated environment which can be explored and interacted with by a person. That person becomes part of this virtual world or is immersed within this environment and whilst there, is able to manipulate objects or perform a series of actions.

Application of virtual and augmented reality is growing in popularity among consumers each year. Goldman Sachs predicts that the virtual reality and augmented reality market in real estate could top $2.6 billion by 2025. A recent survey by Roomy, showed that 14.1 percent of consumers have either used virtual reality or augmented reality when searching for a home.[11] Both can be used to save real estate professionals time and money by allowing agents to virtually stage or show a home.

Augmented reality involves overlaying virtual objects on top of real, physical objects to create the illusion that they're in the same space. The best way to think of AR is Facebook/Instagram filters or Pokemon Go.

VR typically requires the consumer to wear a headset of some sort to visualize a setting in 3D, while AR adds virtual pieces to the real world through apps on laptops, phones and tablets.

Early adopters will appreciate your tech-friendly approach and by jumping in the VR/AR pool early, you'll have a leg up on the competition when other agents follow your lead.

Virtual Reality (all-in-one reality solutions)

- Matterport.com
- VR Global.com
- Transported.com

Augmented Reality

- **HomeSpotter** — Instantly view nearby properties by aiming phone at them.

- **Magicplan** — Create a floorplan with your phone.

- **Houzz's View in My Room 3D** — Allows users to place virtual 3D furnishings or accessories in a room.

- **Homesnap's Walk the Property Lines** — Use your phone or tablet and get real-time, physical view of the property's boundaries.

Video Communication with Clients

95% of Americans now own a cellphone of some kind and 77% own a smartphone. [12] It's one of the few marketing avenues that is available to virtually everyone. Video also happens to be one of the fastest ways to gain credibility online. It can help you brand yourself as the local expert and be used in many marketing mediums to spread your message.

---

10 RISMedia: Predictive Analytics: The Next Big Thing in Real Estate; https://rismedia.com/2017/06/29/predictive-analyt-ics-next-big-thing-real-estate/
11 RISMedia: Predictive Analytics: The Next Big Thing in Real Estate; https://rismedia.com/2017/06/29/predictive-analyt

Video Marketing Statistics from SocialMediaToday.com:

- By 2021, more than 80% of global internet consumption will be video

- Videos are shared 1,200% more times than links and text combined

- Video drives a 157% increase in organic traffic from SERPs (search engine results page)

- Embedded videos in websites can increase traffic by up to 55%

- 81% of people have been convinced to buy a product or service by watching a brand's video

- 44% of consumers prefer learning about a product by watching a video

- Adding a product video on your landing page can increase conversions by 80%

Branding Yourself with Video

If a picture is worth 1,000 words; a video is worth 100 million! Videos exponentially increase engagement, adding click-throughs and social media shares. According to research from the Missouri University of Science and Technology, it takes less than two-tenths of a second for an online visitor to form a first opinion of your brand once they've perused your company's website.[13] If your website doesn't have video included to keep visitors engaged, your visitors are making decisions about your brand in the blink of an eye. If you want to stand out from the crowd of other real estate agent websites, video is a great way to do it, but you want to do it right.

Here are some tips to get you started:

1. **Tripod or Stabilizer** — You don't need a massive, expensive, full-body stabilizer or gigantic tripod. Olloclip Pivot or Stedicam Smoothee are compact, portable devices that allow for seamless pan and tilt action like you see in the movies.

2. **Lighting** — Lighting helps create a certain mood, accentuate details and create better video quality. One of the lighting options you can try is iBlazr 2 which gives you control over the light's brightness. There are several other options available, most of them are fine for simple video recording.

3. **Portable lavalier mic or external microphone** — Most experts agree, the Rode smartLav+ or the Shure MVL are some of the best lavalier mics for a smartphone. While, Blue Snowball Ice Condenser Microphone or Blue Yeti USB Microphone are good for YouTube.

4. **Editing techniques and software** — One of the simplest apps on iOS is Apple's iMovie. It has premade effects and templates for text overlays. You can also visit your local Apple store and register for free classes (apple.com/today) on how to use iMovie.

   For Android, look to apps like Power Director or Filmic Pro. Google's Photo app will automatically edit videos together for you, but output of the final product is limited. More advanced editing options include: Adobe Premiere Clip and Filmic Pro. Other photo editing apps: 1967, Snapseed and Filmborn.

---

[12] Demographics of Mobile Device Ownership and Adoption: www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/mobile/
[13] The Power of First Impressions: https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/223150

5. **YouTube Account** — Although many people are using social media to record their videos, it's important for you to have control of your video content. Creating a YouTube account will allow you to share your videos on different platforms (i.e social media, newsletters, social media, website, etc).

So, once you've got all the tools, what should you record? The key is to be yourself and be helpful. Here are a few simple concepts you can pull off relatively easily:

- Explore everyday life in your neighborhood
- Frequently Asked Questions video
- A video introducing yourself and sharing your unique selling proposition
- Explain homebuyer/homeseller process
- Monthly market update

Communicating with Clients Using Video Chat

The first picture phone premiered in 1964 at the World's Fair in New York. By 1994, we had the original webcam, QuickCam. These early prototypes required special wiring and weren't compatible with the existing AT&T telephone network. The early video phones had limited commercial service in some cities, but failed to take off at $16-$27/minute (that's about $170+ in today's dollars for a three-minute call).

Today, video calls can happen on several devices and in most cases for free. In 2017, Facebook chat logged a total of 17 billion video calls, which is double the amount of video calls in 2016.[14] Video chatting is becoming as easy and simple as calling on the telephone. The applications for real estate agents are numerous. For example, if you have an offer that you need to present to a client, but you're not able to meet in person, you can schedule a video chat and review the contract with your new buyer. You can also share your screen if you need to show a certain section of the contract.

Video chat also works great if you have to show a home to an out of town buyer that's not in town yet or if your client wants to show other members of their family that are not present but would like to share the experience with your buyer. Offering similar solutions to your clients will show them that you embrace technology and are using it to make their buying experience unique and helpful.

Video Chat Apps:

- Hangouts
- Facebook messenger
- Facetime
- Join.me - Free for one on one meetings. Lite is $10 a month for video chats with up to 5 people at a time.

---

[14] Facebook Doubles Video Chat: https://www.theverge.com/2017/12/13/16772704/facebook-messenger-17-billion-video-chats-2017

Client Feedback Communication

"Feedback is the breakfast of champions"- Jack Canfield

Google has a number of powerful apps that can help you create options for client feedback including Google Forms. Google Forms is a free, easy-to-use tool that can be used to create and send branded surveys. Once completed, the information is automatically copied to a spreadsheet for you to review.

You can quickly create a buyer/seller survey, pre-listing questionnaire, buyer questionnaire, closing survey or client party invite, just to name a few. The form can be shared via email, social media or it can be embedded in a page on your website. Once you share the form, the answers are automatically saved in a Google sheet. Once responses are received, Google Forms will analyze the data for you in an easy to read graph.

Google forms is not the only platform to create and receive feedback. Other top-performing form builders include: Wufoo (Free or $19/mo), Gravity Forms ($59/yr), Form Tools (Free), Jot Form ($19/mo), etc.

**Lab: How to Create a Buyer/Seller Survey using Google Forms
(from the G Suite Learning Center)**

1. From forms.google.com, click Blank or choose a template. - OR - From drive.google.com, click New > More. Next to Google Forms, point the arrow > and click Blank form or from a template.

2. Name your form: In the top-left corner, click Untitled form/template form name and enter a new name.

3. (Optional): Change the banner image, theme or background color or font style: Click Color Palette 🎨 and then choose your options.

4. Click Untitled question and enter your question.
   (You get "type"suggestions based on your type of question).

   a. To change the question type, click the Down arrow

5. Add response options (if applicable to your question)

6. Specify if people must answer the question, if so, click Required.

7. To add a new question, click Add question ⊕
   (Repeat as many times as needed)

   a. To add a copy of the existing question, click Duplicate ⧉

   b. Changes are automatically saved.

---

8. When you're done adding questions. Click Settings, General and choose from the following options:

a. **Collect email addresses** — Collect respondents' email addresses.

b. **Response receipts** — Send copies of responses on request or automatically.

c. **Restrict to your organizations' users** — Uncheck this box to distribute your form externally.

d. **Limit to 1 response** — Allow people to complete your form only once.

e. **Edit after submit** — Let people change their answers after submitting them.

f. **See summary charts and text responses** — Let people see a summary of everyone's answers.

g. **When you're done making changes,** click Save.

9. At the top right, click Preview. The preview opens in a new window. To edit the form, click Edit or close the Preview window and go back to your editing window.

10. At the top right, click Send. Choose how you want to send the form:

a. **Email** — You can customize the subject and message contents

b. **Link** — You can shorten the URL. Click Copy and paste the link into a chat or email.

c. **Website content** — Specify inline frame dimensions. Click copy and paste the HTML into your website or blog.

d. **Social media** — Click one of the social media icons.

Action Item 3:

My Communication Roadmap

Now you're ready to build your customized communication roadmap! Take the following questions into account as you design:

1. What are the channels through which I receive leads? Most businesses have online leads and phone call leads but you may have others.

2. What communication tools do I already have and which ones do I want to add into the mix?

3. What is the lifecycle of a client relationship from the first time they interact with my brand to the last? Think of it in phases:

   a. **Phase 1:** What communication will a client have from the first time they contact my office until the first time we meet?

   b. **Phase 2:** What communication will a client have from the first time we meet until we sign a Buyer Representation or Listing Agreement?

   c. **Phase 3:** What communication will a client have from me from the time we sign a Buyer Representation or Listing Agreement until the day we go under contract?

   d. **Phase 4:** What communication will a client have from me from the day we go under contract to the day we close?

   e. **Phase 5:** What communication will a client have from me from the day after closing until they call me for their next transaction?

4. Have I listed the name of a team member who will be responsible for each step in the process?

5. In writing your plan, feel free to use different colors, shapes and team member's initials to distinguish who is responsible for what.

6. *Ready to take your sketch to the next level?* Take time this weekend to try your hand at building an online communication roadmap using Canva. They've got great samples to get you started: www.canva.com/graphs/flowcharts

My Communication Roadmap

TECH + SOCIAL

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Discover best practices for utilizing social media to spread your core message, engage with clients and meet new customers.
2. Identify best practices for posting on various social media networks

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Follow a Local Neighborhood on Instagram
2. Create your personal social media strategy

It's no secret that social media is a huge part of our everyday lives. In the most recent measured period, "77 percent of Americans had a social media profile, representing a 3 percent decrease compared to the previous year."[1] Although there was a slight decrease from 2017 to 2018, social media usage is expected to grow to some 2.95 billion users worldwide by 2020.

© Statista 2019

Top 10 Mobile Apps by Penetration of App Audience
Source: comScore Mobile Metrix, U.S., Age 18+, June 2017

App	Percentage
facebook	81%
YouTube	71%
FB Messenger	68%
Google Search	61%
Google Maps	57%
Instagram	50%
snapchat	50%
Google Play	47%
Gmail	44%
pandora	41%

---
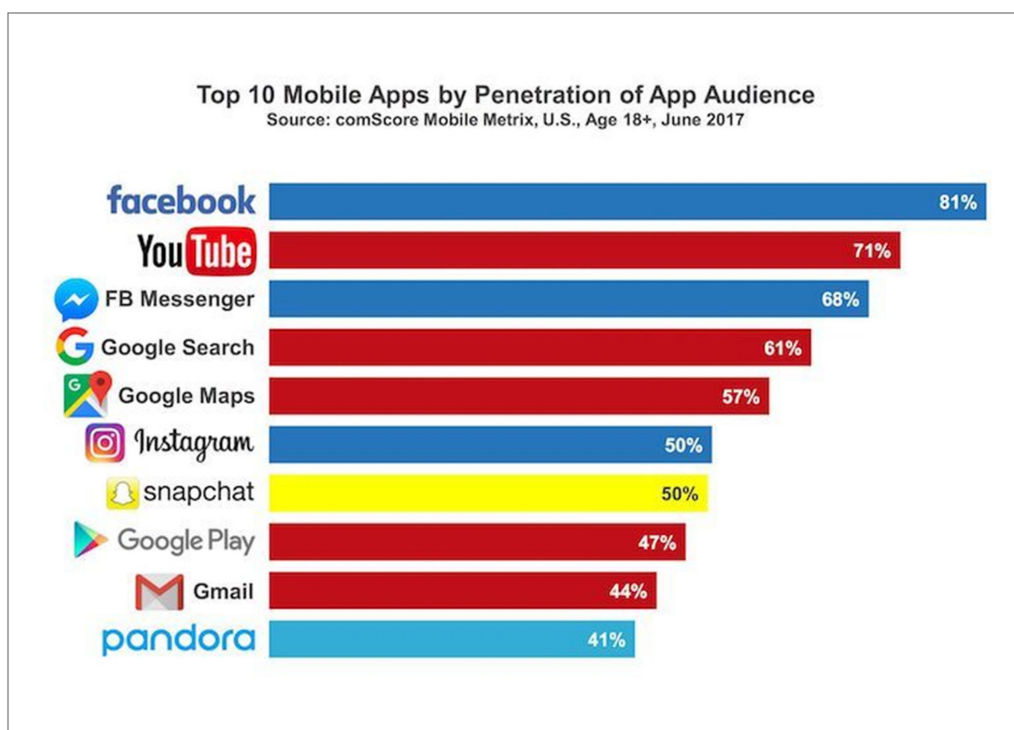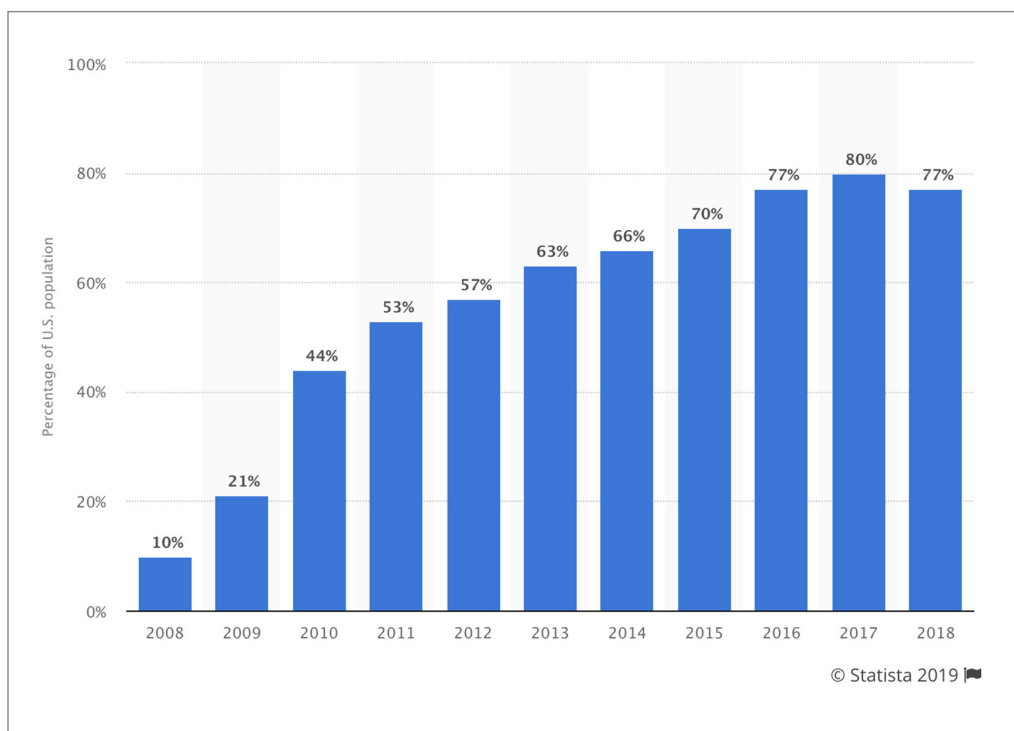
[1] Percentage of US population with a social media profile from 2008-2018: https://www.statista.com/statistics/273476/percent-age-of-us-population-with-a-social-network-profile/

The Facebook app has the highest level of penetration among American adults with a whopping 81%. YouTube comes in second with 71% and Facebook Messenger third with 68%. Among the top 10 apps, 3 apps (Facebook, FB Messenger and Instagram) are owned by Facebook and 5 apps (YouTube, Google Search, Google Maps, Google Play and Gmail) are owned by Google. Two giants essentially own the chart and Snapchat and Pandora are the only exceptions from this duopoly.[2]

Social media usage is intersecting with real estate more each year. Millennials currently make up 66 percent of the real estate market.[3] These 37-and-under buyers are doing more than Googling a few keywords to find their dream homes. They are now including property-related hashtags and social media feeds in their searches. A hashtag is used to categorize content, search related images or posts and insights. When used effectively, hashtags can add more engagement or follows to your social media account.

#TheNationsNashville is an example of a hashtag for a neighborhood that you can follow on Instagram. You can follow a hashtag on your account the same way you would follow an actual person. For example, once you view the search you can choose to follow it.

Follow a Local Neighborhood on Instagram

Search for a hashtag of a local neighborhood or common area of interest in your Instagram account. If you don't have an Instagram account, look on with a neighbor. What are your "aha's"?

#Hashtags

Selective use of hashtags will help you gain interest from followers on your social media accounts but overuse can have a negative impact on your engagement. TrackMaven found that using more than two hashtags in Facebook and Twitter posts can cause a significant drop in engagement, while using more hashtags in Instagram posts increased followers and engagement.[4] This distinction points out the difference of each social media platform and how audiences interact within each of them. Each social platform is like its own neighborhood, with its own set of rules, covenants and restrictions.

Before we break down the rules of engagement for each site, let's review how to research hashtags to see how they've previously been used, before you start using random tags in your posts that may have a different meaning than what you intended. Sites to check before you post a hashtag include:

---

[2] Business of Apps: http://www.businessofapps.com/data/app-statistics/
[3] Real Estate in a Digital Age 2017 Report: https://www.nar.realtor/sites/default/files/reports/2017/2017-real-estate-in-a-digital-age-03-10-2017.pdf

1. Hashtagify.me

Great search tool to use if you are building out a social media strategy or have hired someone to help develop a strategy. Initial searching is free, but more extensive research costs start at $19 a month.
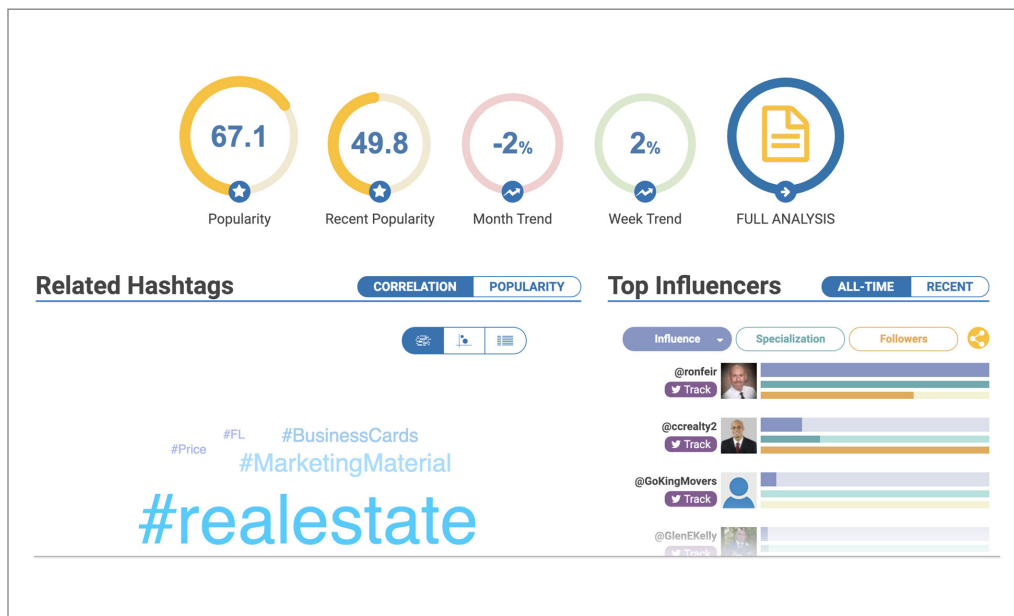

2. RiteTag.com

Website extension that generates hashtag suggestions for you based on the picture you insert in your posts or written text. You can also search terms and RiteTag will supply you with hashtag suggestions as well as show you how that hashtag is performing on social media.

Hashtags		🐦	🔁	👁
🔖 ⚡ #realestate	📊 Get report	317	29	2,532,513
🔖 ⚡ #listing	📊 Get report	17	8	6,379
🔖 ⚡ #home	📊 Get report	171	1,183	458,333
🔖 ⚡ #realtor	📊 Get report	63	0	49,696
🔖 ⚡ #job	📊 Get report	383	46	140,000
🔖 ⚡ #tour	📊 Get report	33	9	27,329

---

[4] PHow to Use Hashtags on Every Social Network: https://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-use-hashtags/

3. Sprout Social

Search hashtag usage and create new hashtags for your social posts. Sprout can also help you build your social media brand and strategy by tracking the performance of each time you use a hashtag. $99 a month paid service that offers a 30-day free trial.
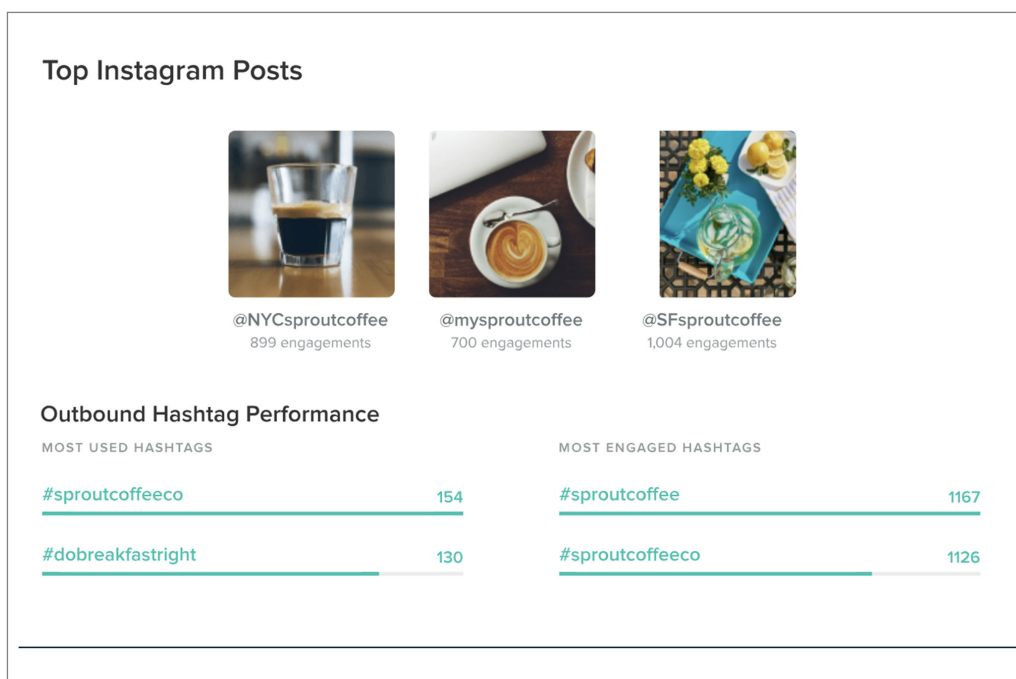
If you're just starting out using hashtags, you don't have to pay for a service. Just login to your social media account, scroll to the search bar and add the hashtag you're thinking about using and press search. This is an easy, free way to see how many people are using this hashtag. You can also look at the engagement of the people who have used them to see how they are performing.

Social Media Basics

No matter which social media profiles you choose, remember the basics:

- Optimize your profile - The bio in your profile should be complete and convey your brand personality. Include hashtags or emojis to relay your brand.

- Complete your profile - Decide whether your name and username will be the same or if you want to brand your username separate from your actual name. Tip: You should use the same style for each social media profile.

- Put your best brand forward - Choosing a profile picture or deciding on how and when you post should be consistent with the brand you want consumers to think of when they decide to engage with you.

- Stick to the 80/20 rule when creating your posts. That means that 80 percent of your posts should be about lifestyle tips and other areas of interest to your clients; only 20 percent should be about your real estate agency and what you can offer.

Developing Your Social Media Strategy

Implementing hashtags into your social media posts is one tool in a larger social media strategy. A social media strategy is a plan of what you are going to do and achieve with your social media accounts.

Is a defined strategy necessary to be on social media? No, however, without a strategy you may waste time, money and energy, on random posts that make no connection to your overall brand. Without a strategy you will not be able to qualify how to best use your resources to get the most traction with your audience.

To begin your strategy, start by deciding what metrics you'd like to track: client engagement, click-throughs, likes, or new business? A defined social media strategy will help you get clear on what you want to accomplish and whether or not your real estate sales are being aided by your social media posts.

When asking agents how much business they generate from social media, most reply, "a lot." How much is "a lot?" How do you measuring success: is it based on the amount of time you put in, the money you spent, the hashtags you are using or just a number of closings?

Here are a few social media goals to consider:

- Increase brand awareness - Focus on content that emphasizes your personality and put your followers ahead of the sell.

- Achieve more sales - Keep consumers aware of how your business is doing and provide items of value for them as they interact with your brand.

- Create a loyal fanbase - Help your followers interact positively with your content by encouraging them to post on your behalf.

Once you've established what your social media goals are, you can begin to implement your plan. How many times are you going to post within a week? Before we can answer that question, it's important to note that not all social media platforms play by the same rules. It's best to post early on some and later on others. Let's review several popular social media platforms to learn more about the best times to post on each network and to look at post topic ideas and winning strategies.

FACEBOOK

Facebook has the most daily users of all social media with more than 1.5 billion daily users as of December 2018.[5] With so many daily users, the emphasis should be placed on how to get their attention. According to SproutSocial.com, the best times to post on Facebook are:

- Wednesday between 12 pm - 2 pm and Thursday between 1 - 2 pm.

- Thursday is the best day to post on Facebook.

- The best time throughout the weekday is 10 am - 3 pm.

- Evenings, early mornings and Saturday have the least amount of engagement on Facebook during the week.[6]

---

[5] Facebook Newsroom: https://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/
[6] Best Times to Post Social Media: https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-social-media/

Facebook Post Topics

When considering what to post on Facebook, try a mix of the following:

Create a Contest

Contests are a way for you to gain followers and increase engagement. Ask people to follow your page, like your post, share a post, or sign up for your email newsletter for a chance to win the prize. Use a hashtag for the campaign to track it's progress and to search results.

Share a Video

Videos posted on Facebook generate an average of eight billion views per day and video posts have a 135% higher organic reach compared to image posts. The video's don't have to be professional, they just need to be authentic and good quality (i.e. still camera, good volume on your voice, lighting, etc.). Remember, "65% of the population are visual learners and 90% of people use video to help them make decisions."

Post a Weekly Series

#HouseoftheWeek, #Behindthescenes, #Amazingkitchens, etc. are all options for a weekly Facebook series that you can post to keep your audience engaged weekly with your updates.

Facebook Tools

Here are a few tools that can move you from casual Facebook user to someone who leverages the power of Facebook to stay connected with people in your sphere of influence and strategically increase that sphere.

- **Create a Facebook Group**

Facebook Pages has long been the go-to hub for businesses, but with adjustments to Facebook's algorithms causing organic reach to decrease even more, many savvy business owners are instead turning to Facebook groups. Facebook groups allow you to create a "room" or space for your handpicked group of Facebook users where you, the group admin, can interact with the people in the group and they can interact with one another.

Groups are different from pages in that a page is a static place where clients usually like your page and move on while groups are an ecosystem of activity among people with similar interests. Many Facebook page owners are content with simply posting on their Facebook feed and occasionally responding if they receive a direct message from one of their customers. But if you want to increase engagement with your posts and generate a more active following, you'll need to be more proactive in reaching out to your target audience. Your goal should be to add to the group's discussion and curate topics that keep them coming back to engage in conversation and find resources.

---

[8] 50 Post Ideas for Real Estate: http://blog.homespotter.com/2018/11/16/real-estate-facebook-page-post-ideas/

- **Create a Friend List**

With a saved friend list, you can preset your targeting preferences and quickly send messages to them with a single click when creating future campaigns. Keep in mind, however, that you should regularly re-evaluate your targeting options to ensure you are reaching the right groups. You can also use multiple saved friend lists to conduct A/B testing to see which groups respond best to different keyword sets.

- **Unleash the power of the "Pixel."**

One of the biggest changes to Facebook's marketing offerings is the Facebook Pixel, a coding option that allows business owners to more fully integrate their Facebook ad campaigns with their websites.

The Facebook Pixel is added to your website's code so it can report on actions that customers take after viewing your ads on Facebook. The Pixel essentially acts as a form of conversion optimization by tracking when customers take desired actions and then using this data to help build more relevant custom audiences. This information can also be used to remarket to customers who have visited your website.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a social alternative to Facebook. Unlike Facebook, you don't have to think of something witty to say, you just have to take a nice photograph or post a great quote. Instagram is all about the photo or video. Like other social platforms, having a social media plan is the best way to maximize your social presence on IG.

Instagram's audience is rising above a billion users a month, so standing out in the world of noise can be a challenge. Quintly, a social media analytics site, analyzed over 44,000 Instagram profiles, and about 8.9 million cumulative posts to see which generated the most engagement and audience increases.

Here's what they found:

1. **Videos increase interaction up to 21.15%**

   Videos generate 18.57% more interactions than image carousels, but carousels see 2.18% more interactions than single image posts.

2. **Larger Audience Profiles use video more often**

	Images	Video	Carousels
0-1k followers	82%	9%	9%
1k-10k followers	79%	11%	10%
10-100k followers	75%	11%	14%
100K-1M followers	70%	19%	11%
1M-10M followers	65%	25%	10%
+10M followers	62%	27%	11%

Graph Source: Social Media Today
https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/new-study-looks-at-latest-instagram-best-practices-including-hashtag-use-a/543067/

Instagram's audience is rising above a billion users a month, so standing out in the world of noise can be a challenge.

👤 12 💬 54 ❤️ 114
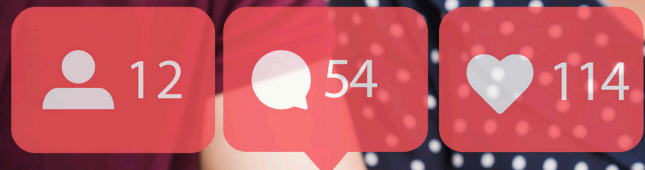
The above graph suggest that those who post videos are more likely to build their following.

3. **Shorter Captions Increase Engagement**

Across all account groupings, 1-50 character captions are those that see the most engagement, while the majority of people are using more than 300 characters in their updates.
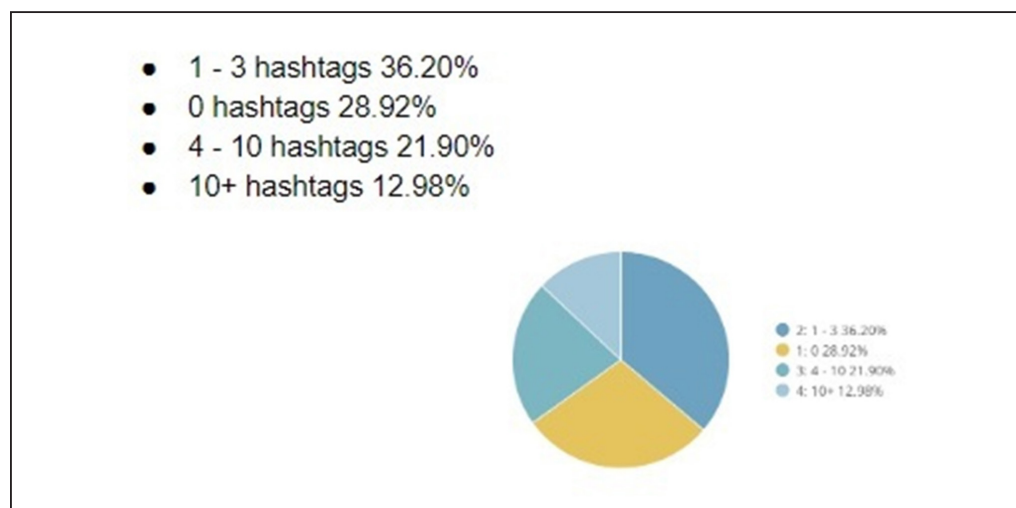
Graph courtesy of Social Media Today

4. **Fewer hashtags = More engagement**

Here is a chart that shows the number of hashtags used on IG posts, for example, 36.2% of IG posts have 1 - 3 hashtags.

According to Quintly, "most profiles used 1-3 hashtags, but they tended to get more interactions when they didn't use them all." [9]

5. **Emojis are more than fun, they're engaging**

The majority of Instagrammers don't use emojis with their posts even though stats suggest that adding at least 1-3 emojis in your posts has a positive impact on engagement. Take the hint.

6. **Weekend Funday for Posts**

Quintly's report found that 76.13% of updates are posted on weekdays and posts made on the weekend saw up to 22.29% higher interactions.

Now that you know how to increase engagement when you post, Sproutsocial.com reports that the best times to post on Instagram are:

- Wednesday at 3 pm, Thursdays at 5 am, 11 am, 3 pm - 4pm and Friday at 5 am.

- Best Day to Post: Thursday

- Posting starting at 5 am Tuesday - Friday has highest engagement.

- Worst Days to post: Sunday and Monday

When considering what to post on Instagram, try showcasing communities or lifestyle posts. Include short property features tagged with the Photo Map feature so viewers know where they can find the homes you feature. You can also create a certain hashtag of the week to add followers, for example #ListingoftheWeek.

---

[9] Social Media Today: Latest Instagram Best Practices: https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/new-study-looks-at-latest-instagram-best-practices-including-hashtag-use-a/543067/

LINKEDIN

If every social network functions as a neighborhood, LinkedIn would be the business district. It's the area where you can connect with business-minded contacts and talk about their real estate needs. Since our goal is to cater to the network that we are apart of, in LinkedIn it's best to have a professional headshot and profile. You may not want to use the same photo on Facebook as you do on LinkedIn.

If you're feeling adventurous and want to make sure you've picked the right headshot use Photofeeler (www.photofeeler.com). Photofeeler will anonymously put your headshot(s) in front of people that will rate it based on competency, likeability and influence.

A complete profile also sets you apart in LinkedIn. Your work history is basically your online resume, so check the dates, add descriptions and make sure to highlight something you made better during your time there. Don't forget about your background photo, which you can edit. If you don't have a branded photo for your social networks, check out LinkedInBackground.com, Unsplash.com, Canva or consider hiring someone from Fiverr or the like to help you create a branded photo. Another LinkedIn tip is to ask for endorsements and skill endorsements. This will help position you as an expert in your field.

Best time to post on LinkedIn (according to Oberlo.com):

- Tuesday - Thursday between 10 am - 11 am EST
- Saturday and Sunday are the worst days to post on LinkedIn

When considering what to post on LinkedIn, try:

- Join a real estate-related group or a local interest group to make new contacts
- Post industry news and research
- Quick tips or polls about business related topics
- Add FAQ posts of any questions current and past clients have asked you

SNAPCHAT

In 2017, Snapchat had an average of "157 million active daily users that added about 2.5 billion snaps a day."[10] Since then Snapchat has lost some of its popularity, but it's still a popular social network although it has less active daily users than Instagram. Snapchat is all about attention and what message you're sending while you have the attention of your followers. Before you take the plunge into Snapchat, it's important to speak the language. Here are some helpful terms to get you started:

Snaps: Photos or videos you upload to Snapchat

Snapback: When you reply to someone's snap

Story: Same as Instagram, a photo or video that you share with followers that only lasts for 24 hours.

If you haven't jumped into Snapchat yet, don't feel the need to start today. Based on trajectory of Instagram's popularity, start there instead of Snapchat.

---

[10] Beginners Guide to Snapchat:
https://realtytimes.com/advicefromtheexpert/item/1001016-the-beginner-s-guide-to-snapchat-for-real-estate

"*Youtube allows you to customize your Youtube channel's homepage banner, profile image and description.*"

YOUTUBE

Video viewing rises year over year. In 2018, the platform logged more than 1.9 billion monthly users.[11] According to Brandwatch, "by 2025, half of viewers under 32 years old will not subscribe to a pay-TV service." What does this mean for your real estate business? It's time to setup your YouTube channel or take posting videos on your channel more seriously. If you've not started with your YouTube channel, start with setting up a YouTube account in your name, team name or branded city real estate name.

Just like the other social networks, YouTube allows you to customize your YouTube channel's homepage banner, profile image and description.Once that's complete, you are ready to start adding content.

YouTube Content Ideas

Market Updates — How is the market doing in your area? Add a quick video update on market stats of an area including home values, economic development or new development.

Buyer/Seller Tips — Frequently asked buyer and seller questions are a great topic for videos. Once you record the videos, you'll be able to send those videos to new buyers and sellers as well as post on any of your social networks and your website.

Interviews — Interview vendors, decorators or past clients. These are just a few ideas of people to interview. Remember, the North Star of great content is choosing information that is relevant and useful to your target audience.

Neighborhood Overview — What are the best restaurants, parks and local shops in the area? This is your time to show your expertise in an area.

Remember don't let your lack of professional video equipment stop you from getting started. Record your video's with what you have, apply the information we discussed in the previous chapter and hire a virtual assistant to help you with any needed editing.

To learn more, check out the bevy of helpful tips and tools at the National Association of Realtors website: https://www.nar.realtor/social-media

---

[11] 46 Fascinating and Incredible Youtube Statistics: https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/youtube-stats/

Unit 6

TECH + TOOLS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Discover today's top Apps
2. Learn which apps other agents are using to enhance their business

ACTION ITEMS:

1. There's an App for That

What's Hot Now

Real estate agents are constantly being sold new technology that promises to simplify their business while increasing their production. Does this sound familiar: "One deal and this will pay for itself!" Right after that, you're being pressured to make a decision on the newest CRM platform, lead generation system, task management system or marketing tool. Weeding through the masses of information, terms and metrics can be time consuming and exhausting—so we've done that part for you!

Here's a list of the Top Tech Tools for 2019:

Creative Marketing Platforms

Use these tools to create marketing material such as presentations, fliers, social media posts and other marketing materials.

- **Canva (Canva.com)** — A graphic-design tool website that provides access to over a million photographs, graphics and fonts.

- **Stencil (GetStencil.com)** — Simple image creation for social media marketers, bloggers and small businesses. Integrates with Buffer for social media scheduling.
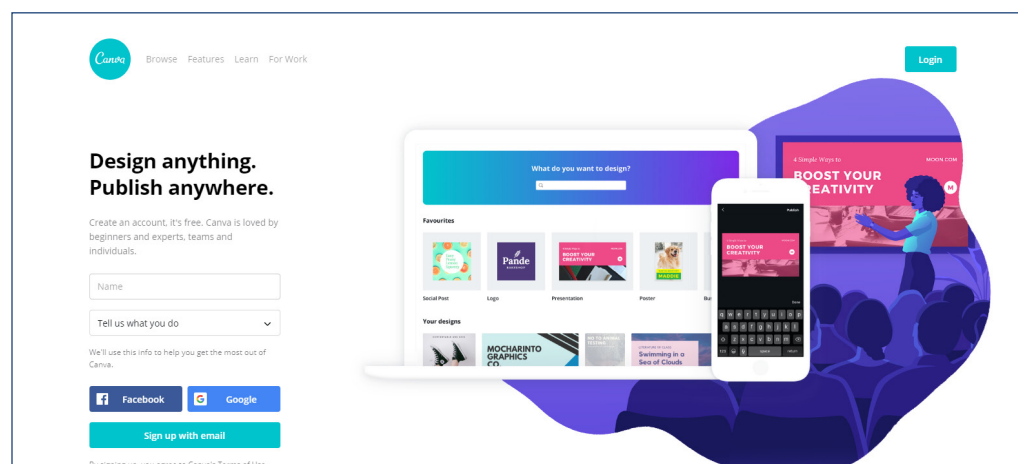
Email Apps

- **Gmail for Mobile** — User-friendly, easy-to-use email software that allows multiple account support, plugs in with Google Drive and easy integration of many apps via Chrome Web Store.

- **Edison Mail (mail.edison.tech)** — Getting to inbox zero is a cinch with easy unsubscribe features, fast search and assistant categories to help you get organized. Mobile app only.

- **Spark (SparkMailApp.com)** — Smart inbox categorizes your most important emails and snoozes the others. Great for a team with shared drafts, private team comments and pre-written email templates. Mobile and Desktop App available.
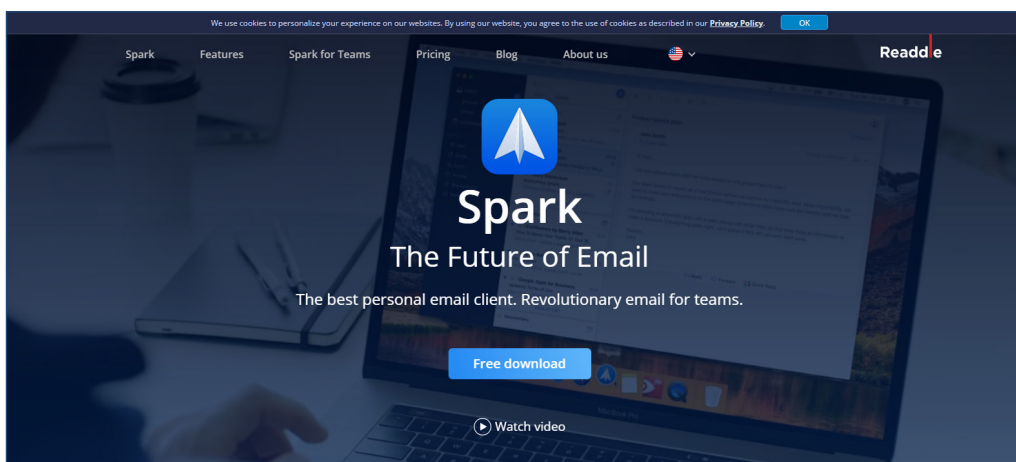
Chat Bots

- **Drift (Drift.com)** — Connect with customers visiting your website with chat bots. Drift is a conversational marketing platform that focuses on qualifying leads that visit your website, allowing you to spend time only with the best leads. Pricing ranges from $0 for manual chatting with customers up to $1500 for chatbots to talk with customers until they are ready to move forward.

- **LiveChat (LiveChatInc.com)** — Clients can start conversation at anytime while visiting your website. LiveChat automatically sends greetings to customers and will let them know that you are available. Service grades your chat conversation and will show you which areas of your customer service needs improving. Pricing starts from $16 monthly to $149 a month based on your desired features.

- Other Options: **Freshchat, Tawk.to**
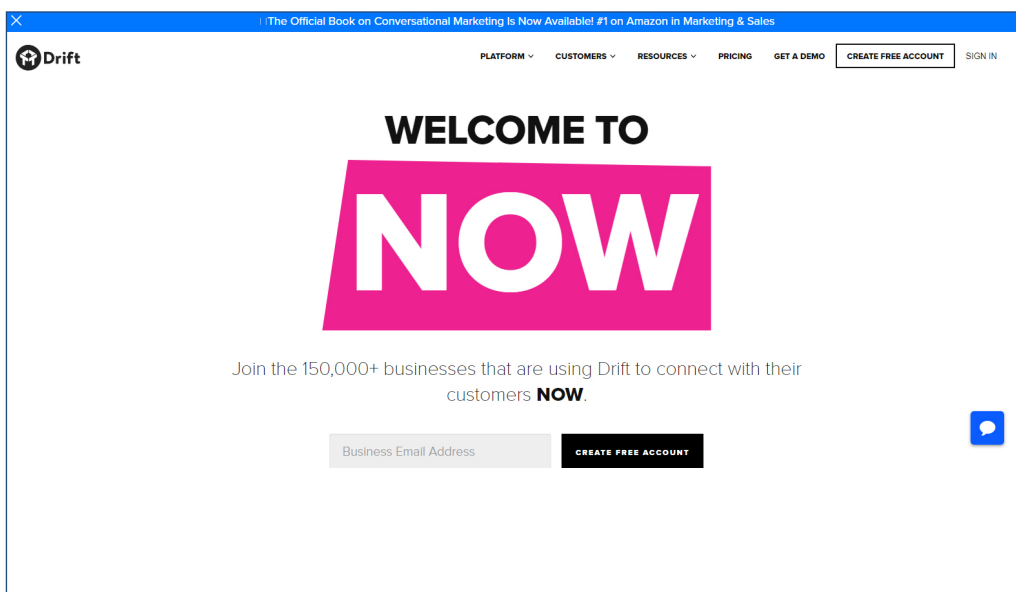
Task Management

- **Google Keep (Keep.google.com)** — Task management app that lets you create several different lists of activities from shopping lists, work lists, reminders and more. All of your notes are synced in the cloud and accessible from all your devices including mobile. Google Keep was recently integrated into the sidebar of the newly updated Gmail and all Google Drive software Google Docs, Sheets and Slides, making it easier to add tasks. Google Keep is free and works with Android and iOS.

- **Remember the Milk (RemembertheMilk.com)** — Quickly add to-do items to list. Offers collaboration with others and a few integrations with Gmail, Google Calendar, IFTTT, Evernote and Twitter. Free version available with limited integrations or $39.99 per year for Pro version for customization, unlimited sharing and attachments.

- **Todoist (Todoist.com)** — Task management app that tracks to-do's via projects that can be shared and assigned with various members of your team. Integrates with Google Chrome, Gmail and other apps to make your activities seamless. Mobile app available for Apple and Android. Free plan with limited options or paid version for $29 per year.

- **Trello (Trello.com)** — Collaborate tasks with members of your family or your team to stay organized. Integrates with numerous apps to meet any unique business needs. Trello is available on mobile Google Play store and Apple Store. Free version or paid version for Trello Gold is $5 a month or $45 a year.

- **Smartsheet (Smartsheet.com)** — Manage workflows, collaborate with team members and clients. Mobile option available for Apple and Android. Integrates with Microsoft, Google, Slack, Salesforce and many others. Pricing starts at $14 per user/month with 10 sheets and some collaboration features or $25 a month for more sheets and collaboration options.
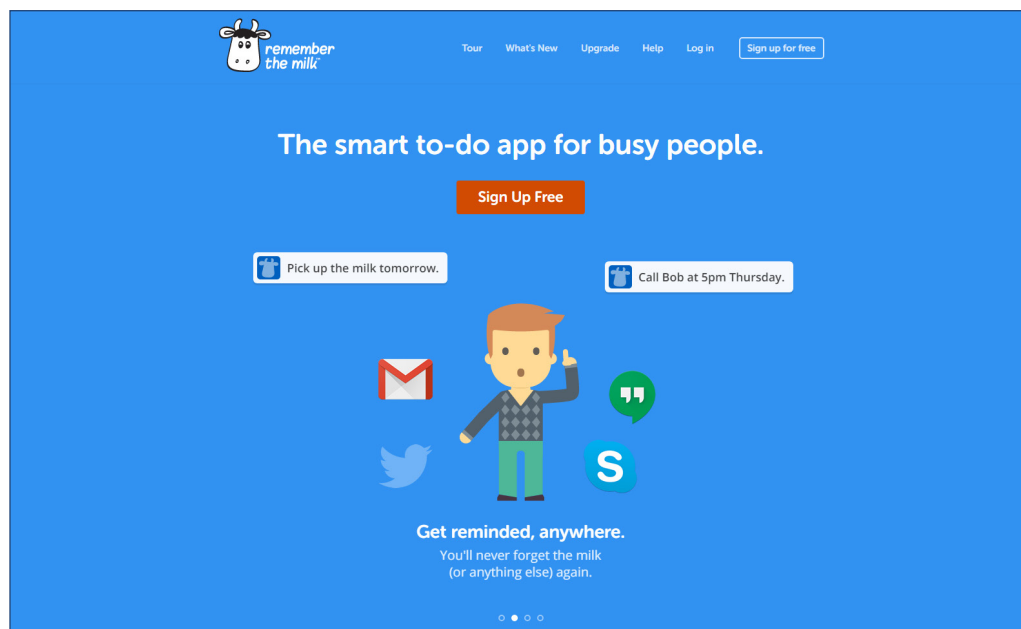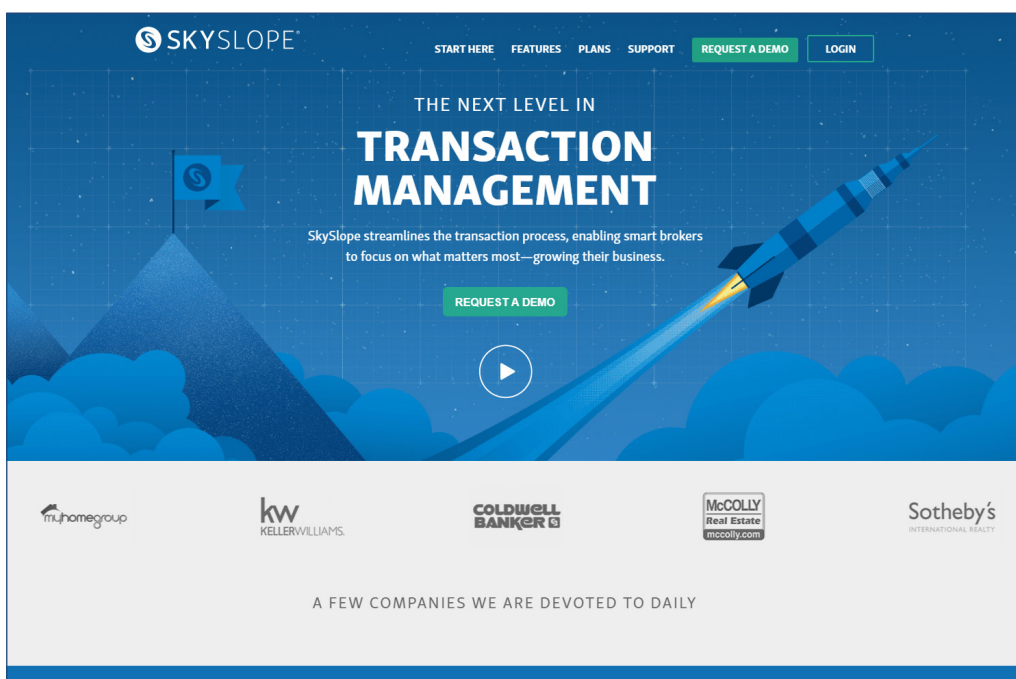
Transaction Management

- **Docusign and Dotloop** — Two of the most commonly used transaction management platforms. They both allow you and your clients to e-sign documents, create tasks associated with the transaction and submit documents to your office. Dotloop has a free version that does not include mobile access and a paid version at $25 a month that does include mobile access. Docusign does not have a free version, the basic package is $10 a month or $20 a month for NAR members with more features.

- **SkySlope (SkySlope.com)** — Capture every interaction with leads, clients and vendors including texts and emails. SkySlope can also pair with your brokerage for access to additional analytics.

- **Reesio (Reesio.com)** — Helps you streamline all of your transactions online, reduce legal liability and eliminate paperwork and manual processes with a mobile-friendly design. Solution for brokerages that want to oversee each aspect of the transaction. Costs $25 a month per user with discounts for brokerages that purchase 4+ seats.

- **Folio (Amitree.com)** - Used by over 55,000 agents and their clients to organize transactions with a customizable timeline. Finds emails, contacts and dates in Gmail with the Chrome extension, creates shareable templates with customers for transactions. It does not have an e-signing component. Free for up to 3 transactions, $25 for unlimited timelines with one account and up to $125 a month for up to ten accounts.

- Other Options: **Transaction Desk with Instanet Solutions** (Free as a Tennessee Realtors Member)

Virtual Assistant

Hiring a virtual assistant is very similar to hiring an assistant that is going to be in the office everyday. The process starts with having a job description for the position. If you don't have a job description available, start by writing a list of all of the activities you do on a daily basis. At the end of the day, write a "D" beside the tasks that can be delegated to an assistant. Use that list to create a basic job description.

Choose the platform to upload your job description. There are several options for finding skilled assistance online. You can check your local business search platform, Indeed or Monster.com. Those platforms do not specialize in only virtual assistants, so you will have to be very specific in your job description that this listing is only for virtual assistants or you can choose more customized platforms, like UpWork or MyOutDesk, that are only for virtual assistants.

- **Upwork** (Upwork.com): Various job specialties available for hire. You upload your job description, interview potential candidates and decide hours and pay.

- **MyOutDesk** (MyOutDesk.com): Designed specifically for real estate agents. MyOutDesk pairs you with a full-time virtual assistant. The MOD Virtual package is $1747 a month.

- **Zirtual** (Zirtual.com): College educated assistants, trained in administrative tasks, proficient in Microsoft and Google. Pricing starts at $398 a month for 12 hours up to $1398 a month for 50 hours of task work.
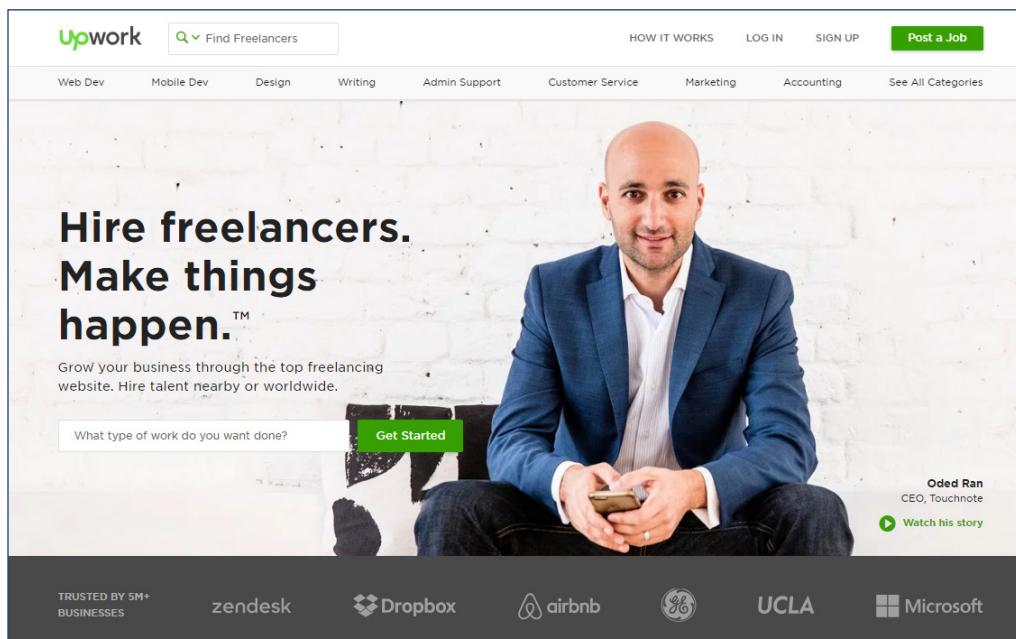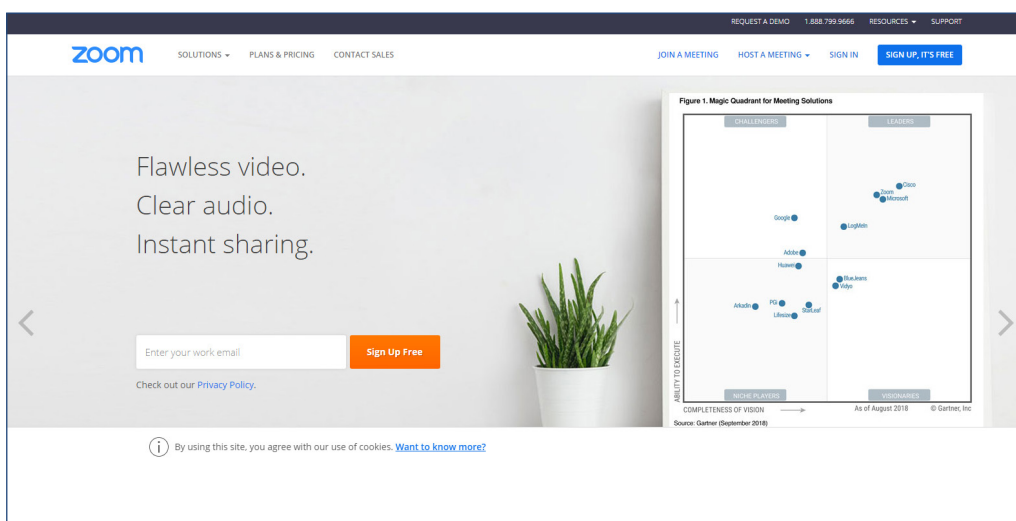
Bring Your Team Together

- **Slack** (Slack.com) — Slack is a virtual office space where you and your team can share projects, files, archive information and create workflows. You can create custom channels for each transaction or have private conversations with various members of your team.

- **Zoom** (Zoom.us) — Online meeting portal usable for trainings, buyer/seller consultations or webinars. Free version has unlimited 1 to 1 meetings and 40 minute limit on group meetings. Paid versions cost up to $19.99 month for unlimited meetings, personalization and cloud storage. Join.me is another alternative for video meetings and their prices range from $10-$30 a month.

- **Facebook Groups** (Facebook.com/groups) — Using Facebook Groups is a great way to stay in contact with your clients or members of your team. There are three types of Facebook Groups: Open (Anyone can view members and their posts); Closed (Anyone can view the group, only members can see posts) and Secret (only members can see the group and its information). Create a Group with clients based on transactions.
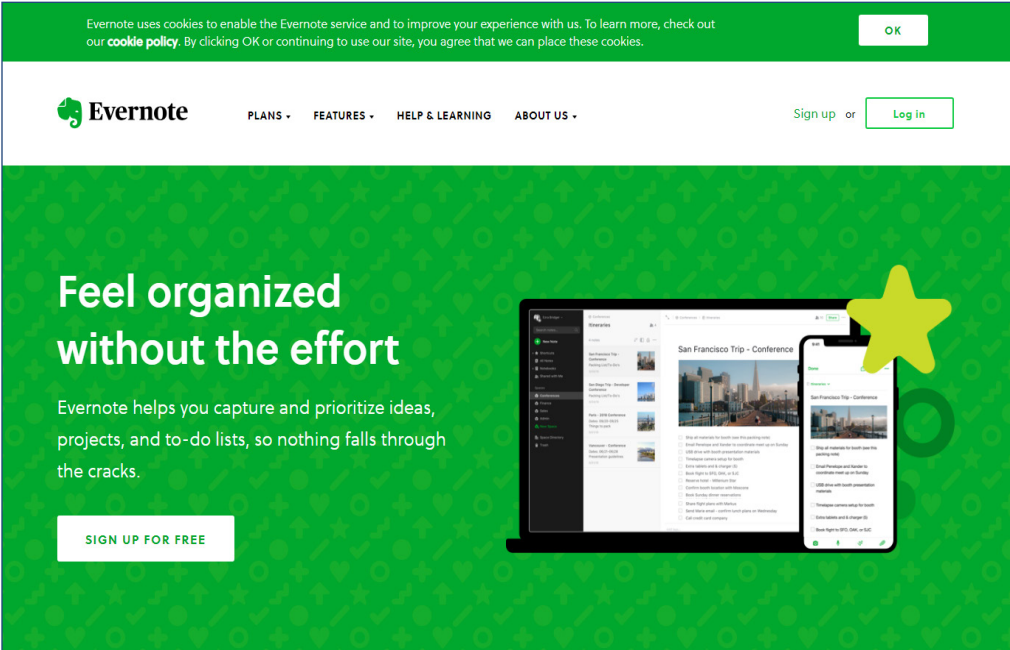
How to setup a Facebook Group

1. Click the top right of Facebook and select "Create Group"
2. Enter your group name, add group members and then choose privacy settings (as explained above) for your group.
3. Click Create
4. Personalize it by uploading a cover photos and adding a description
5. Click "More" below the group photo and select "add members."
6. Enter the names of the people you want to add and click "add."

Organize in the Cloud

There are many benefits of working and storing documents in the cloud instead of just storing in the cloud. A recent survey by Frost & Sullivan showed that companies investing in collaboration technologies increased productivity by as much as 400%. [1] Creating documents in the cloud allows for collaboration between team members, clients and your main office. The synergy of the two will increase efficiency end sentence with simplicity.

- **Google Drive** (Drive.Google.com) — Online storage system enabled to create, store, collaborate and share files saved to the platform. Creation tools include Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Forms, Google Slides and more. Free to use with 15GB of storage or upgrade to Google One for $19.99 a year or 200 GB+ for $2.99-$9.99 a month.

- **Microsoft OneNote** (Onenote.com) — Create and Organize notes from your business across all of your devices. Notes can be tagged, drawn, recorded or saved from your favorite websites and shared with colleagues or clients. Free.

- **Evernote** (Evernote.com) — Capture and prioritize ideas, to-do lists and projects. You have the ability to save audio notes, draw on your mobile device and create shareable notebooks with action items. Free version for taking notes up to $14.99 per month to add additional features including collaboration for teams.

- **Cloud Storage Only Options:**
  Dropbox (Dropbox.com), Box (Box.com) or SugarSync (Sugarsync.com)

---

[1] 8 Ways Cloud Computing Can Increase Productivity and Profits: https://www.business.com/articles/8-ways-cloud-computing-can-increase-productivity/

Lead Generation Sites and Apps

- **Hubspot Marketing (Hubspot.com)** - Grow traffic with landing pages and automation that integrates tools, data and processes. Free up to $800 per month for all-in-one marketing solution.

- **Offrs** (Offrs.com) - Lead generation service specifically for listing leads in your chosen and available territories. Pricing varies based on chosen territories.

- **Zillow Premier Agent** (Agents.zillow.com) - Zillow has unpaid services for agents, you can submit new listings and claim listings that were uploaded to Zillow from your MLS. Paid services include your name appearing exclusively on your listings and additional advertising options.

- **Placester** (Placester.com) - IDX website with different templates to choose from and a-la-carte update options to enhance website and lead generation tools. Special pricing options for NAR members, view website for details.


Landing Pages

- **Unbounce** (Unbounce.com) - Easy to use landing page, popup and sticky bar builder with mobile responsive pages. Available templates for plug-and-play pages. Free 30-day trial followed by three options of $79+/mo, $159/mo or $399+/mo.

- **Instapage** (Instapage.com) - Optimized landing pages for website and mobile that track how visitors interact with your page by utilizing mouse movement, click and scroll depth heatmaps. Pricing varies.

- **Leadpages** (Leadpages.net) - Unlimited lead pages and lead generation campaigns such as Facebook Ad Builder. 14-day free trial with pricing starting at $37/mo following.
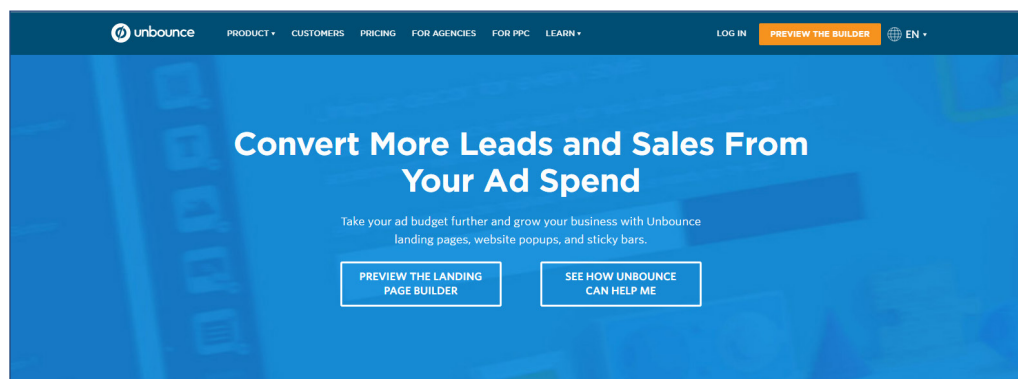
Automation

- **Zapier** (Zapier.com) — Automate actions between apps and you've completed a "zap." There are hundreds of "zap" templates from services such as Gmail, various social media and CRM services. Pricing: $20 to $250 a month depending on number of Zaps you use.

- **IFTTT** (IFTTT.com) — IFTTT stands for "if this, then that". Similar to Zapier, this website automates actions between your apps or websites of your choice. Free.

- **Buffer** (Buffer.com) — Pre-schedule posts across multiple social channels. Integrates with several other apps. Free account for up to 3 social accounts up to $399 for 150 social accounts.

- **Hootsuite** (Hootsuite.com) — Media publisher to manage numerous social platforms with real-time or scheduled updates. Varying costs for adding multiple channels.
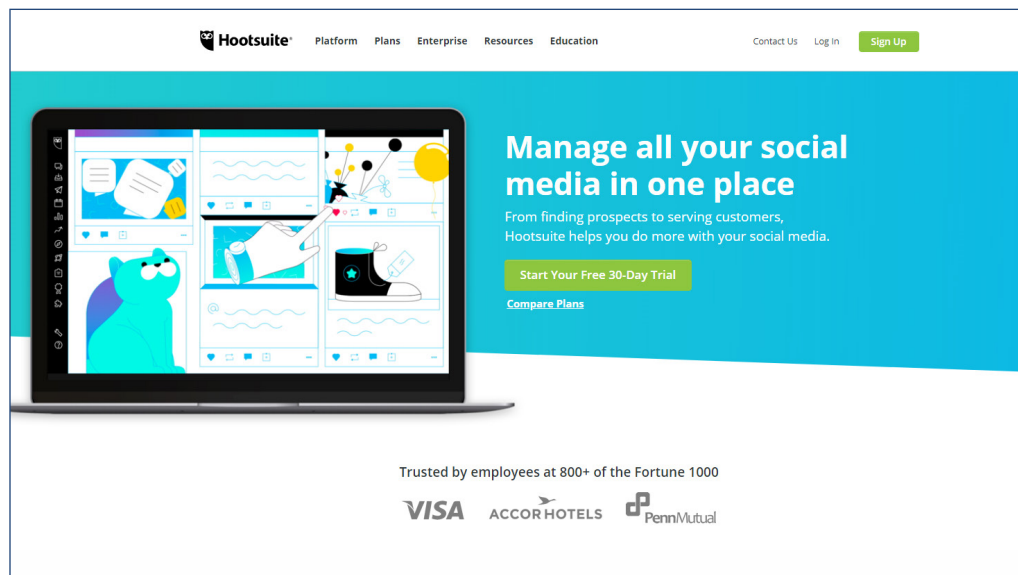
Client Services

- **Updater** (Updater.com) — Updater is a moving app you can provide to your clients that helps them complete their moving-related tasks, such as reserving a trusted moving company, transferring cable and internet, and updating accounts and records.

- **Key.me** — No more borrowing the homeowner's keys or losing their only spare, this app allows you to snap a picture of the key and head to a Key.me kiosk to make a copy. Photo saves in app, so if you lose the key, simply print again in app. Pricing and kiosk locations vary.

- **Matterport** (Matterport.com) — 3D camera and building scanner that creates virtual tours, floor plans, 360 and HDR photos. You can either buy the needed equipment on the site or hire a service partner for your home.

- **BoxBrownie** (BoxBrownie.com) — Staffed with 40 professionals that create and edit images to help homes sell faster with a 48-hour turnaround. Site offers virtual staging, enhances images with editing services for as low as $32. Remember, if you alter photos on MLS, you must add a disclaimer to edited photos to prevent violation of the Code of Ethics.

- **Other options:** MagicPlan (App), PlanOmatic

Open Houses

- **OpenHomePro** — Use app instead of pen and paper for buyer sign-in to get more leads, automate follow-up and ability to share open house with social sharing. Cost is $20 per month with a 30-day money back guarantee.

- **Spacio** (Spac.io.com) — Open House lead capture and followup app that collects visitor information and automatically sends follow-up emails once open house ends. It can send property updates and new listings to previous attendees. It gathers social profiles on verified contacts and creates open house reports to keep sellers informed. Integrates with various CRM Apps like Contactually, Follow Up Boss and Mailchimp to name a few. Free 30 day trial, after that it's $25 a month for agents and $145 per month for brokerages.
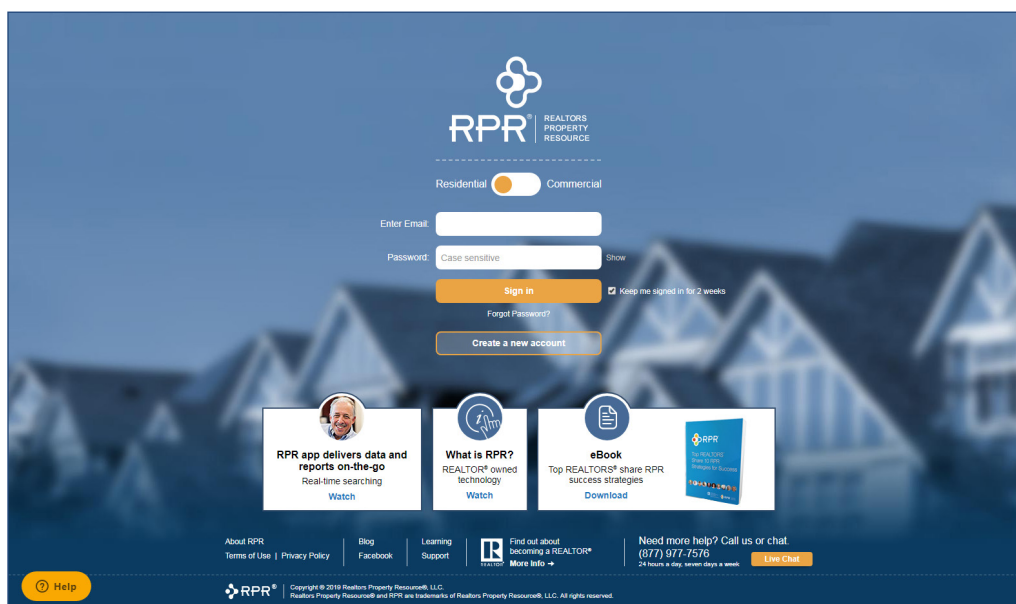
Research

- **RPR** (NarRPR.com) — Easy to use historical data, neighborhood reporting, mortgage and school information to help you showcase yourself as the expert with buyers and sellers. Free tool as a NAR member. Mobile app available.

Action Item #1:

There's an App for That

In groups of 2 to 4, discuss the Apps listed here. Has anyone had experience with them? Which apps are you currently using and why?

> "Real estate agents are constantly being sold new technology that promises to simplify their business while increasing their production.

Year End Summary

Name: _____

My Goal for Closed Transactions: _____

Actual # of Closed Transactions: _____

Transaction Breakdown

Number of Listing Closings: _____

Number of Buyer Closings: _____

Contracts Pending: _____

Number of Expired/Withdrawn Listings: _____

Number of Buyers that Fell Through: _____

Where Did My Business Come From?

Past Clients/Repeat Business: _____

Past Clients/Referral Business: _____

Developments/Builders: _____

Sphere of Influence: _____

Sphere of Influence/Referral Business: _____

Just Listed/Just Sold: _____

Farming: _____

Newsletter/30 Day Message: _____

FSBO/Expireds: _____

Sign Call: _____

Internet/Website (Personal): _____

Walk-ins/Floor Duty: _____

Agent Referral: _____

Online Mktg (Zillow/Trulia/Realtor.com/etc): _____

YourWebsite.com: _____

Social Media: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____

_____

Know My Numbers:

Contacts I added to my database: _____

List Price/Sales Price: _____

Average Days on Market: _____

Average Sales Price: _____

% of Listings That Sell: _____

Area with Largest Market Share (Solds): _____

After completing this assessment, I am surprised that:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What worked well this year:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What things/practices will I continue/start next year:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What things/practices will I stop doing next year:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Provided by: **Kristy Hairston** — Excel Coaching Network

CYBERSECURITY CHECKLIST
BEST PRACTICES FOR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS

Cybercrime can be devastating to real estate professionals and their clients. The following checklist offers some best practices to help you curb the risk of cybercrime. Because data protection and cybersecurity laws differ across the country, NAR recommends that you work with an attorney licensed in your state to help you develop cybersecurity-related programs, policies, and materials.

A. Email and Password Hygiene
- ✓ Never click on unknown attachments or links, as doing so can download malware onto your device.
- ✓ Use encrypted email, a transaction management platform, or a document-sharing program to share sensitive information.
- ✓ Carefully guard login and access credentials to email and other services used in the transaction.
- ✓ Regularly purge your email account, and archive important emails in a secure location.
- ✓ Use long, complicated passwords such as phrases or a combination of letters, numbers, symbols.
- ✓ Do not use the same password for multiple accounts.
- ✓ Consider using a password manager.
- ✓ Use two-factor authentication whenever it is available.
- ✓ Avoid doing business over unsecured wifi.

B. Other IT-based Security Measures
- ✓ Keep antivirus software and firewalls active and up-to-date.
- ✓ Keep your operating system and programs patched and up-to-date.
- ✓ Regularly back up critical data, applications, and systems, and keep backed up data separate from online systems.
- ✓ Don't download apps without verifying that they are legitimate and won't install malware or breach privacy.
- ✓ Don't click on links in texts from unknown senders.
- ✓ Prior to engaging any outside IT provider, review the applicable privacy policies and contracts with your attorney.

C. Law, Policy, and Insurance Considerations
- ✓ In collaboration with your attorney, develop a written disclosure warning clients of the possibility of transaction-related cybercrime. Recommend in the disclosure that buyers never wire money without first confirming the wiring instructions via a phone call to the intended recipient.
- ✓ Stay up-to-date on your state's laws regarding personally identifiable information, the development and maintenance of cyber and data-related business policies, and other legally required security-related business practices.
- ✓ Develop and implement the following policies:
  1. Document Retention and Destruction Policy
  2. Cyber and Data Security Policy
  3. Breach Response and Breach Notification Policy
- ✓ Ensure that your staff and licensees have reviewed and are following all implemented policies.
- ✓ Review your current insurance coverage, and ask your insurance agent about cyber insurance and the availability and applicability of products such as social engineering fraud endorsements and computer & electronic crime riders.

For more information about cybercrime and cybersecurity, please visit NAR.realtor's data privacy and security landing page. Questions can be directed to NAR Associate Counsel Jessica Edgerton at jedgerton@realtors.org.

430 North Michigan Avenue • Chicago, IL 60611-4087 • 800.874.6500 • www.REALTOR.org

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* REALTORS®