



| Marketing Know-How |

Building your Real Estate Business by Improving Your Website.

Want to double your real estate income? Well, according to the National Association of Realtors, agents with personal websites typically earn twice as much as agents without them. Which makes launching a personal website a great way to help grow your real estate business.

Of course, there's more to succeeding online than just having a site. The content, ease of navigation, and how well you market your site can greatly influence how effectively your website contributes to your business.

Invest in a professional-looking website.

Your website is a reflection of you. So whether you're building your first site or updating an existing site, here are some important questions to consider:

- Is it organized?
- Is it easy to navigate?
- Do all the links and buttons work?
- Is the content accurate?
- Can you add new pages to keep the site fresh and the content relevant?

Become a key source of information for your target market.

Your website can only work if your target client visits it. And one of the best ways to increase your website's popularity is by making your site a destination for buyers and sellers within your target market. By promoting your listings, services and successes, and regularly updating the information on your site, your target client will have a reason to visit again and again.

Make your site easy to find.

The first and most obvious step in helping people find your website is to list your URL on all of your promotional materials, from business cards and stationary to marketing materials such as postcards and flyers. You should also make sure that every email you send out has a

link to your website. It's an easy way to promote your site that won't cost you a cent.

Increase your site traffic with SEO.

Ultimately, much of your site's traffic will come from search engines. That's where search engine optimization (SEO) comes in.

SEO is the process of increasing your standing on the results pages of search engines such as Google and Yahoo. A number of elements influence where your site ranks on a search. Some of those factors are closely guarded secrets. But there are a number of simple steps you can take to improve your results with most search engines.

- Add links to and from your website.

The more relevant links your site has, the easier it is for search engines to find your site. The same goes for links from other sites to your site.

- Make sure each page of your site has copy and headers with important keywords.

Search engine "bots" crawl sites looking for keywords. By including general keywords (such as "realty" or "realtor") and specific keywords that might be relevant to your target (such as "condo", "financing", or your particular geographic area of expertise) you increase your chances that a search for, say "condo realtor in Smithville" will return with your website high on the list of results.

- Submit your site to the search engines.

By submitting, you're inviting the search engines bots to crawl your site, thus making it more likely that your site will show up in searches. Here is the submission page for Google:

<http://www.google.com/addurl.html>

Pay per click.

Unlike free SEO results, SEM or pay-per-click marketing results are the paid listings that typically appear at the very top or on the right hand side of a search engine results page.

With SEM, you start by bidding on any number of selected keywords or phrases. When a user searches for that keyword, your ad will appear along with the other paid listings on the search results page. You only pay if the user clicks on your ad. Some SEM tips include:

- Be specific. More general keywords such as “realty” often have a high cost per click, while more targeted keywords like “Smithville condo” may offer a lower cost per click.
- Limit your clicks. It may seem non-intuitive, but your objective shouldn’t be to get lots of clicks. Remember you pay for each click. Instead you should try to select keywords that will get fewer, but more qualified clicks. After all, it’s the qualified clicks that have a better chance of boosting your business.
- Higher isn’t necessarily better. The more you bid on a keyword relative to the competition, the higher on the page your ad will appear. As a result, ranking at or near the very top of a listing will cost more. What’s more, some studies have shown that the listings at the very top don’t necessarily have the highest click-through rates.

Learn more at:

<http://adwords.google.com>

<http://searchmarketing.yahoo.com/>