

6 'MUST-HAVES' FOR YOUR WEBSITE

Developing a successful real estate website is imperative to the long-term success of your business in today's market. By keeping in mind that your website brands you as the expert in your real estate market, you will want to make sure you are well represented in your online presence. Below, find six core elements that will help you achieve this goal and grow your business.

1. Get a personally-written homepage that really connects to the needs of the consumer visiting the site. Gone are the days when we can just have generic words and a consumer is interested. You want your site visitors to know they have come to the right place and that you are an expert in the local real estate market and can help them with all of their needs. Whether you are focusing on first-time home buyers, the move-up buyer or the luxury home market, you want to make sure you are connecting the consumer with what they would want. Put yourself in their shoes and be sure to let them know you have the experience and expertise they need.

2. Targeted buttons and sections on the site that reflect the target market you are specializing in. For example, if you market specific towns within a metro area (Austin, Texas, for example), then your site should have main pages about towns that you service—such as Round Rock, Liberty Hill and Georgetown—to prove you are knowledgeable in this market. Give them a reason to stay on your site by offering unique calls to action on the site: the ability to get free market reports, home value information or elements like a custom search feature, located right on the front page. This will plant the strategy for lead capture.

3. On the targeted pages in the site, there must be property search links to get them to get back to searching for properties or—even better—have them see properties for sale in specific price ranges. Get them engaged by having them look at properties while they are right there on that page. Have links that allow a visitor to easily search listings between \$200,000 and \$300,000, \$300,000 and \$500,000, and \$500,000 and \$750,000.

4. Have auto-drip cultivating tools to develop the relationship. Statistics show that home buyers will start searching for a home online months in advance of actually buying. If they come to your site and want to download free reports, get information on home values or register for the latest listings, make sure you have it set up so when they fill out the form, they, in turn, get the information they want. With the proper system, you won't



have to manually load them; instead, they go into a letter drip campaign for at least a year. Give them resources, cultivate the relationship and put their needs first, and you will convert a higher percentage of leads.

5. Have a site created so that when you are ready, a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy can be easily developed. Make sure that each page on the site has its own section capable of utilizing titles, metatags and descriptions for that specific page, making it structurally sound for amazing results. Also, having a blog within the site's platform will allow new content to be added so that your site is flush with content that encourages search engines to keep coming back.

6. Have the site built in a "scalable" platform where it can grow with you for the long-term and you won't have to worry about outgrowing the site and having to start over. Having the ability to change and add to your website will help your site stay on the cutting edge and allow your business to prosper. The ability to add your own content, buttons, traffic-tracking abilities and even social media tools, such as videos, podcasts, audio files and more, keeps your site interesting, informative and successful. A site with easy editing features will help you keep costs down and make changes without the stress of having to ask a Web developer for every change. **RE**

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