

# Generating and Nurturing Leads with Social Proof:

How to Efficiently Leverage Online Reviews



# Table of Contents

<b>1: Understanding the Immense Value of Social Proof</b>	1-2
<b>2: Reaching Out to Clients to Get Brand Feedback</b>	3-5
<b>3: Securing Acclaim from Local Market Influencers</b>	6-8
<b>4: Crafting Original Content from Customers' Praise</b>	9-11
<b>5: Maximizing Reviews Using Email and Social Media</b>	12-14
<b>6: Enhancing Your Social Proof Strategy Over Time</b>	15

# 1. Understanding the Immense Value of Social Proof

When shopping online, what kinds of brands do you tend to purchase from most often: ones that barely promote their products, services, and customer reviews, or ones that do just the opposite and heavily promote who they are, what they sell, and what people have said about them?

You may not realize it, but **you're impacted by businesses' marketing each and every day.** That's why you, like practically every other consumer, primarily shop at the latter type of company: They share what makes them so special — and why their customers think they are as well — in many online (and even offline) locales, which, in turn, gives you a clear understanding of the value they provide.

It's this convincing, detailed social proof that has helped businesses small and large build their customer bases since the very beginning of commerce. Reviews, ratings, testimonials, case studies — they all play an important role in companies' ability to gain more brand recognition and market share.

Many of these types of social proof have historically been leveraged via outbound methods — billboards, bench ads, newspaper ads, and the like. Nowadays, though, it's all about sharing this positive client feedback online. **Just take a look at some social proof statistics that show its importance for brands' digital efforts.**



92%

As of 2016,  
**92% of consumers**  
now read online  
reviews before  
making purchases.



13%

**Just 13%**  
of all consumers  
consider buying  
from companies  
with 1- or  
2-star ratings.



90%

**Roughly 90%**  
of consumers  
say online  
reviews impact  
their purchasing  
decisions.



9/10

**9 in 10**  
consumers share  
positive brand  
experiences they've  
had with  
their networks.

SOURCES: BrightLocal, Zendesk

It's beyond evident the overwhelming majority of consumers today — including home buyers and sellers — turn to the internet to discover all about the businesses they want to potentially buy from to ensure other customers and clients of theirs have had high-quality experiences with them and enjoy the products and services they've purchased from them.

So, as it relates to your real estate business, **it's clearly in your best interest to implement a social proof plan for your real estate marketing strategy:** one that educates your buyer persona(s) about what you bring to the table — and how you're a far better choice than competing agents in your market.

In this detailed guide for agents, we delve into what it takes for you to begin your social proof plan, how you can effectively reach out to previous clients to get their feedback, ways you can implement their praise in your marketing, and the premier ways to promote your reviews online, so read on to learn how you can get going with this new and beneficial brand promotion today — **and use it to generate and nurture your real estate leads.**

## 2. Reaching Out to Clients to Get Brand Feedback

A strong social proof strategy starts by **understanding the best means by which you can secure feedback** from your clients. In other words, you need to have a carefully crafted approach as to how you'll contact buyers and/or sellers with whom you've worked in weeks, months, and years prior so you can ensure you get the right kinds of feedback on your first outreach attempts to each one.

Now, we understand few consumers want to be contacted by companies they've bought from in the past, let alone nagged to provide praise for them — especially long after the last time they even purchased something from them. However, the real estate industry is quite a bit different than most other sectors: It's far more personable than just about any other field.

You, the agent, have a very hands-on relationship with your clients. They see you putting in the work to get the top bids for their listings or the ideal homes for sale to bid on, so, more so than with other professionals, they are more likely to take time to evaluate your work after the job's complete — meaning you can more easily secure ample evidence of your top-tier work you can share on your IDX website.

The premier outreach plan takes into account the last part of the client lifecycle — that is, the moment your buyer or seller clients purchase or offload their properties with your help. It's in this moment you need to strike with the “ask”: **Getting your seemingly satisfied customers to share their insights** into your efforts ... and it all starts with knowing the right messaging and mediums:

First, look into the online rating and review software in the marketplace you could prospectively use to obtain client feedback. There are many business survey tools you can use — from SurveyMonkey to Typeform. However, an ideal solution is one that features pre-made questions tailored for home buyers and sellers, not just generic ones for general consumers.

Take **RealSatisfied**, for instance: The platform comes ready-made with dozens of distinct, buying- and selling-oriented questions that apply to pretty much any real estate transaction. That way, you don't have to worry about coming up with your own particular set of questions to ask each client after deals close and you get the same, uniform questions to levy to those clients each time, meaning you have consistency for your feedback routine, which is important to compare answers among different clients over time to properly gauge their satisfaction.

Moreover, the customer satisfaction tool provides a wealth of analytics regarding the client feedback you acquire, including how many clients reply to your email survey requests, what their overall level of contentedness with your work is, and which types of questions tend to get answered by them most frequently. Along with sharing options for other real estate portals and social networks, like Zillow and Facebook, this is arguably the **premier option to get your social proof strategy off the ground** and headed in the right direction.

Regardless of the solution you use to gather client feedback for your business, it's vital to be as thorough and detailed in your request as possible while not droning on and on in your message.





For example, if you choose to send manual emails to your clients in the week following closing, be sure you thank them once again for employing you in the first place, then dive right into your request:

***“I’d love if you could take 15 minutes sometime this week to write a short review about my work for you. The longer the better, but any praise you could offer my business would certainly be incredibly helpful and appreciated.”***

Undoubtedly, some of your clients will be succinct (arguably too much so) in their replies. As long as you get some semblance of decent applause for this audience, however, you have collateral you can use to eventually form fully fleshed-out reviews and testimonials on your real estate website.

Don’t forget, though, that you can generate business commendations from more than just those you work with. There’s also the public relations aspect to social proof that can prove very fruitful for your brand promotion.

# 3. Securing Acclaim from Local Market Influencers

When you hear “public relations,” you may automatically associate it with Fortune 500 companies making generic announcements about new products or services (or possibly branding specialists conducting spin for celebrities to cover up their scandals). The PR industry, however, is about much more than just putting out blasé press releases (or repairing a famous actor’s public image). It’s also about **showcasing what a company offers to the world, hearing positive stories about them, and learning about specific people they’ve helped.**

Yes, you should primarily focus on getting acclaim from your clients before **delving into public outreach through various PR tactics**, but when you have a customer rating and review strategy that’s eventually on auto-pilot (meaning you complete deals for ecstatic buyers and/or sellers who supply significant amounts of favorable feedback after each deal is closed) this is another ideal avenue to take your social proof efforts — and it all starts with reaching out and connecting with the biggest, most popular individuals, publications, and brands in your market.

**Start by listing out all of the VIPs in your market** — in other words, those who have considerably large network and are considered influencers in your area. Take local bloggers, for instance. You may not deem them the most popular people in your community, but each market tends to have a fair number of full-time blog enthusiasts who share intriguing information about the region: upcoming events to know about, cool bands making their way through town, the newest eateries to try out, and so on. While the focus of their blogs may not pertain to real estate whatsoever, that doesn’t mean you can’t leverage their online and area popularity for your own benefit.



# Using Public Relations to Earn More Social Proof

Here are some of the premier ways you can utilize a PR strategy to generate more buzz to boost your real estate brand.



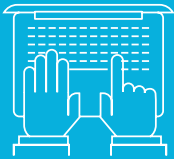
## **NETWORK LOCALLY OFTEN:**

Leave no stone unturned when it comes to making new, potentially fruitful connections in your market.



## **CONDUCT MEDIA OUTREACH:**

Contact bloggers, journalists, reporters, and other media members to build relationships with them.



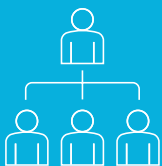
## **REACH OUT TO BLOGGERS:**

Identify the most popular bloggers around to offer your unique insights for a post (or series of posts).



## **SPONSOR EVENTS:**

When local organizations hold events, offer to sponsor them in exchange for free air time, so to speak.



## **HOST LOCAL MEETUPS:**

Let local media members come to you by holding a speaking engagement and meet-and-greet.

Offer your input for a future blog post to one or more of the best bloggers in your market. This could be in the form of buying or selling advice you can dispense for its readership or to discuss something else you're passionate about that pertains to the blog's focus.

For example, if you find a foodie blogger whom everyone adores, suggest an interview about the unrivaled restaurants future homeowners in the area need to know about. In return for your insights, you could ask the blogger in question to give you some digital space to subtly promote your brand and — you guessed it — offer some praise about your brand to act as some off-site social proof.

This, of course, is just one, specific example of this type of PR-esque outreach. Connect with others in the spotlight within your market as well — local TV and radio stations, podcasters, newspapers, magazines, monthlies, etc. — so you can rinse and repeat this process over and over again. Over time, you'll have **developed a far bigger footprint for your real estate business** — and likely one that's bigger than other real estate brands with whom you compete for business: a win-win all around.

The key is persistence. Not every outlet, blogger, or other media entity you reach out to is going to want to run a story on your agency or speak with you for a special piece. That means, just like your lead segmentation, you need to weed out the individuals and publications who don't have interest in working with you and focusing on the ones who are willing to have you on air or featured online on their website.

It's these folks who will eventually prove beneficial for your social proof, get your brand name top of mind with potential prospects, and **drive more of the right kinds of traffic to your IDX website**, which, at the end of the day, is the whole point of social proof strategy.

## 4. Crafting Original Content from Customers' Praise



Alright, let's segue back to your particular real estate clients — the people whose reviews, ratings, and testimonials ultimately matter for your long-term success as an agent. **It's these individuals who can most impact your future lead generation numbers**, as it's their voices that will be heard by those prospects when it comes time to select a real estate pro to represent their housing needs.

Sure, your other website and digital content will play a sizable role in your business growth as well, but given just how imperative social proof has become in buyers' and sellers' decision-making in this day and age, your clients' opinions ultimately reign supreme as it relates to your bottom line. The good news regarding your social proof efforts is there is a bevy of different mediums you can use to **showcase the client feedback you receive on your real estate website**.

- 1. Testimonials Page.** The most basic (yet still very effective) method is to create a dedicated real estate testimonials page, where you can include quick-hit snippets of the many commendations you obtain from customers — usually in just a few sentences. That way, you can develop a scannable list of sorts that features every client you’ve ever had who offered their thoughts on the work you did for them and your brand in general. Just imagine you’re one of your site visitors checking out this page: If you saw several dozen people indicating just how happy they were with your work, wouldn’t you want to learn more about the agent in question and consider hiring them?
- 2. Reviews Page.** Whereas testimonials are the short-form social proof for your IDX site, reviews can be considered the long-form editions. Do the same as you did for your testimonials: Create a dedicated page on which you can feature lengthy, in-depth commentary from your clients. This, of course, requires that you’re able to secure a fair amount of written feedback from your clientele. As mentioned, though, the deals you help them close are some of the biggest transactions they’ll ever experience, so more often than not, they won’t mind writing up several paragraphs worth of praise for your agency.
- 3. Video Interviews.** You can (and should) even feature these recordings not just on the aforementioned pages, but also on your homepage and about page — perhaps even a **video montage of different client interviews mashed together** to show just how many people you’ve helped purchase or offload homes for sale over the years in one, 2-minute clip. When featured on these pages, you can craft copy to accompany the videos that acts as even further proof of your business acumen: for instance, sharing you’ve helped X buyers in your market buy homes since your career began or noting you sold Y dollars worth of property in the past decade.
- 4. Infographics:** Usually, this visual-based collateral is best for spotlighting local housing market data and offering how-to tips and tricks for your niche audience. However, that doesn’t mean you can’t use the medium to showcase your most satisfied customers as well. Ask clients you’ve closed deals for if they don’t mind if you use a photo of them, their feedback, and the listings they bought or sold in stylish infographics you can feature on your website and in other online channels (e.g. lead-nurture emails and your social media pages — including and especially Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).



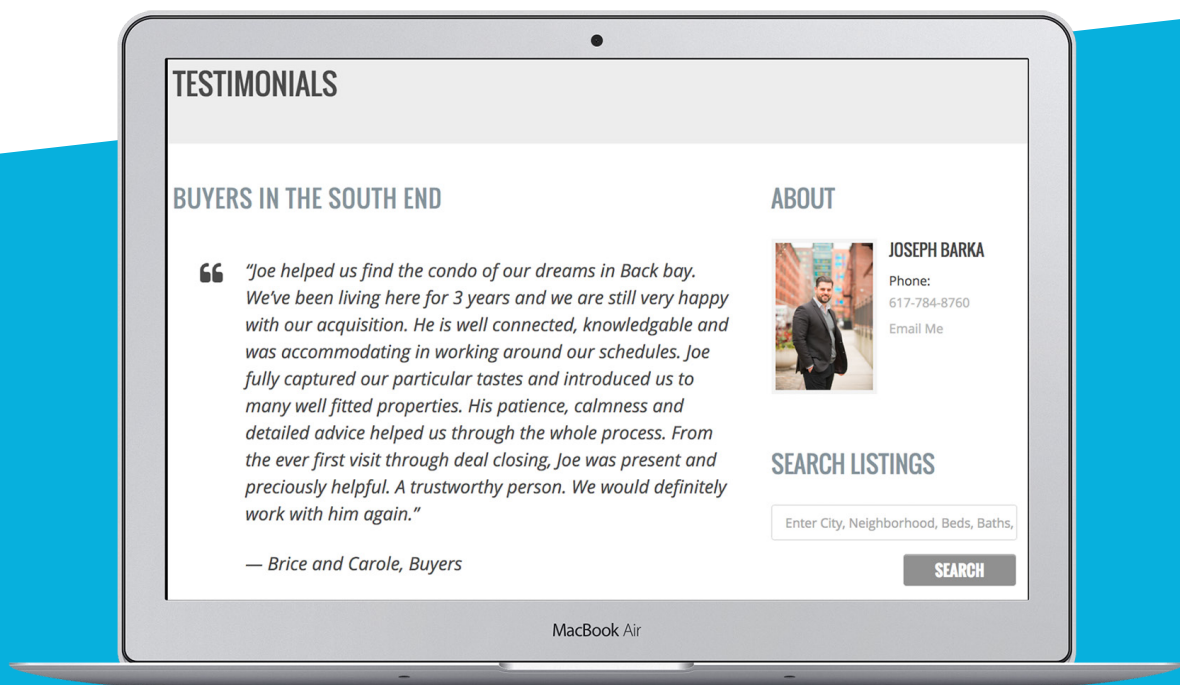
These are just some of the content assets you can generate from the notes and opinions your customers share with you post-closing. There's really no end to the types of **online (and even offline) social proof collateral you can devise** and, eventually, share with your website visitors and existing lead pool. What's important, though, is to craft this wide array of content so you can capably prove to the core demographic(s) you want to work with you're the absolute best person for the job.

If you're stuck in terms of how you can differentiate your reviews and testimonials from other agents in your market, simply evaluate their real estate websites. **How do they exhibit their social proof? How detailed are their site pages that feature client responses? What kinds of calls to action do they incorporate on those pages to improve their lead conversion odds?** Ask yourself these questions whenever you want to start (or restart) your social proof marketing so you can give your brand — and IDX website — a leg up on the competition and truly make your business and web presence stand out from the rest.

# 5. Maximizing Reviews Using Email and Social Media

Hundreds of contented reviews and testimonials from each and every one of your clients won't do you any good whatsoever if no one knows they exist and where to read or view them. That means you **must have a thorough promotion plan for your social proof pages and assets** that gets them right in front of your primary audience regularly — including and especially through your drip email marketing campaigns and social media accounts.

Let's start with your lead-nurturing emails. It may sound like a complicated endeavor to automate your email sends, but in reality, there are numerous platforms that simplify this process for brands and professionals in just about every industry, including real estate. Once you've researched the market to find the drip email solution that best fits your budget and needs (in other words, **an affordable option that's intuitive and syncs with your CRM**), you can fashion your messaging to leads in your database that feature newsletters, digests, and other email types — ones that can seamlessly incorporate your social proof assets.



The premier audience to focus on first is your top lead segment: the hottest leads in your CRM that have proven they routinely visit your real estate website, read blog posts, learn about your business, and/or favorite listings featured throughout your site. It's these prospects who, unsurprisingly, have the **best chance of converting into new business opportunities**. So, be sure they receive drip emails featuring your social proof early and often.

There is no one right frequency or email type to send your contacts. Just be certain that any messaging sent their way positions you as a knowledgeable, successful agent. You can achieve the former with regular blog entries and niche site pages (i.e. area/community pages that highlight area neighborhoods), while you can accomplish the latter with — yup — your social proof.

While you're older and colder lead buckets may not seem important to nurture often, **that doesn't mean they should be outright ignored**. Create another drip campaign that sends them an email, say, once every six weeks, so you can gauge if their housing needs or timeline has changed. If they haven't, then you can keep them on this particular drip setup and continue to feature new content, including your reviews and testimonials, and see if any of them happen to become more qualified prospects by opening your messages and clicking links back to your site or even contacting you.

Once you've set up the requisite drip campaigns featuring your online reviews, you can focus on another supporting promotional tactic: social media. **Real estate lead generation from Facebook has grown markedly** in the past handful of years for Realtors, while the other major social networks have proven to be very beneficial traffic drivers and branding tools for agents and brokers alike. Therefore, it should come as little shock these channels should account for appreciable amount of your digital promotional efforts and optimal avenues to share your customer satisfaction feedback.

Whether you want to solely share your social proof through organic shares (that is, status updates) or take your Facebook marketing game to another level by advertising on the platform and featuring links to your reviews and testimonials pages, articles, videos, and other collateral, the important thing is you make the most of the social network for your brand marketing. Facebook's content algorithm constantly changes regarding what business content gets through to users' News Feeds, **so over-promoting yourself with your social proof may bump you down a notch**, but that's not to say you can't include links to these pages in your blog posts and share those on your Business Page.



After Facebook comes pretty much every other premier social media outlet out there.

**Twitter is a fantastic channel for mass-sharing your website content;** just be sure to tweet out links to a healthy mix of both property details pages for local listings, new blog content, special resources (e.g. buyer's or seller's guides), and — of course — your client feedback. Instagram, meanwhile, doesn't allow you to share links on your account, but you can still publish photos and videos featuring your clients, the latter of which can show them speaking to you and/or the camera to relay their complete and utter satisfaction with your labor.

The world of email marketing and social media promotion is ever-changing in terms of best practices and best means of connecting and resonating with one's audience, so as long as you stay on top of these updates and trends for both promotional paths, **you'll continue to have a solid understanding as to how you can share your social proof** in the most effective and efficient ways possible . . . and continue to turn your IDX site visitors into legitimate leads you can start working ASAP.



# 6. Enhancing Your Social Proof Strategy Over Time

As with every other tactic and technique you can **put into play for your online real estate marketing strategy**, you will need to slowly but steadily fine-tune your social proof approach. You might hit a home run with your first batch of review and testimonial content on your website — or, you might not get much or any traction from them at the beginning. Regardless of how you start, though, it's critical to stick with it and continually make better use of your customer ratings and feedback.

It's equally as important to remember you won't be able to make use of your social proof if your client list dwindles down. So, focus on building your customer base by constantly **optimizing your IDX website for your niche audience and search engines**, closing deals with the prospects you earn, manage those leads in your CRM database, and bettering your skills for the negotiation table.

Once this is mastered, you're ready and raring to go to ask those you work with to sit down and take some time to expound upon what made you the right agent for them — and over time, **you'll naturally improve your customer outreach routine and get better, more substantial feedback from your clients you can leverage online.**

# Making the Most of Social Proof: The Must-Use Checklist for Real Estate Pros

Use this printable checklist to ensure you secure client feedback you can use on your real estate website immediately following every closed deal and, in turn, use to generate new leads and nurture.

## REACH OUT TO MY PAST CLIENTS

**Meetup:** Ask my clients to meet in person following closing to request feedback from them.

**Phone:** Call my clients to ask them if they can provide an in-depth evaluation of my work.

**Email:** Send a message to my clients digitally to petition for praise about my business.

## GET MULTIPLE TYPES OF FEEDBACK

**Rating:** Get my clients to rate how well I performed on the job (e.g. star rating, numeric grade).

**Review:** Secure a long-form review from my clients that goes into detail about my work.

**Testimonial:** Obtain a short-form testimonial from my clients regarding the quality of my services.

**Yelp:** Appeal to my clients to go to my Yelp page and write a short review (e.g. a few paragraphs).

**Portal:** Solicit my clients to review my business on Zillow, Trulia, and/or Realtor.com.

**Facebook:** Capture star ratings and reviews from my clients on my Facebook Business Page.

**Google+:** Direct my clients to my Google+ My Business Page to rate my work there as well.

## CREATE NEW WEBSITE CONTENT

**Page:** Develop a dedicated page on which I can feature all ratings, reviews, and testimonials.

**Copy:** Write unique, search-optimized copy explaining the nature of this page on my site.

**Images:** Incorporate photos of my clients with each form of social proof they provide me.

**Videos:** Ask my clients to appear on camera to relay some of their customer feedback.

**Graphics:** Produce additional multimedia (e.g. attractive infographics) featuring social proof.

## PROMOTE ALL OF THE SOCIAL PROOF

**Email:** Share links to my social proof page and recent reviews with my lead lists via email.

**Facebook:** Link to my Facebook Business Page in the occasional lead nurture email.

**YouTube:** Embed my video reviews in my drip email campaigns for prospects to watch.

**Twitter:** Tweet links to social proof in addition to other content (e.g. blog posts, listing pages).

**Instagram:** Post photos and videos featuring my clients and their business feedback.

**Snapchat:** Snap images and clips of my clients sharing their positive commentary.

**Ads:** Set up ads in Google AdWords that direct searchers to my social proof page.

# Discover the 10 essential pages for your IDX website.



[WATCH NOW](#)

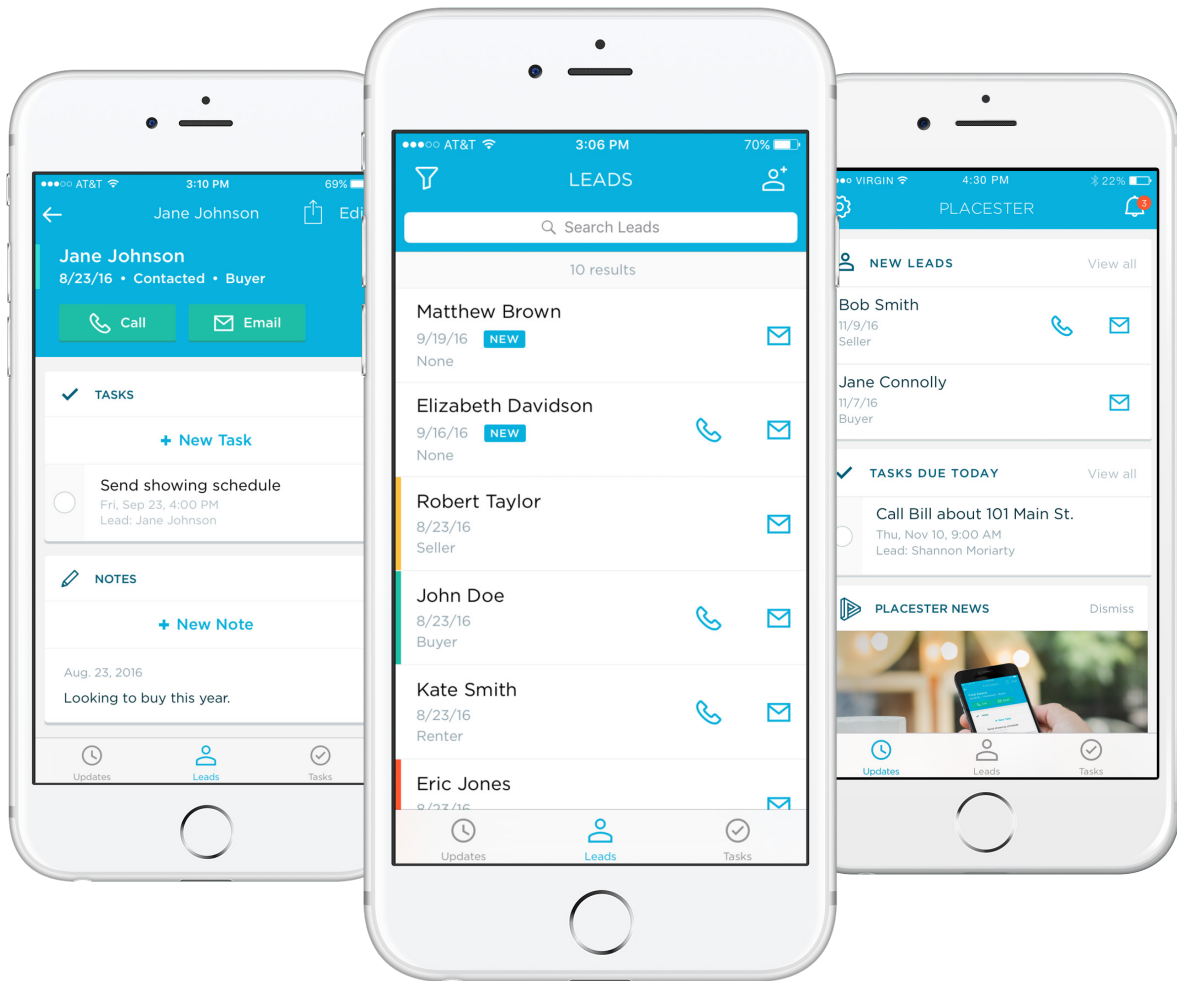
Find out how you can make  
the most of your reviews.



[WATCH NOW](#)

# Download Placester Mobile on Your iPhone Today

Get our new iPhone app for real estate pros to more easily and effectively manage your leads and clients.



[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)

# Improve Your Real-Time Marketing with Placester

Talk with a Placester team member and learn how our solution can help you better attract, capture, nurture, and manage your leads.



CALL NOW  
**1-800-593-1751**

**LEARN MORE**

