

The 2017 Guide to Modernizing your Real Estate Strategy

**From setting up your digital presence to managing leads.
Get started with real-time marketing.**



Introduction

The “quality-not-quantity” approach continues to take the real estate industry by storm. No longer are the days when agents spent their days pouring money into Zillow to build a sizable leads database and cold-calling past clients, existing prospects, and fellow peers to get a bounty of referrals.

Nowadays, the modern agent focuses nearly entirely on building, expanding, and perfecting their online presence and adopting the inbound marketing methodology — that is, using their IDX websites, email campaigns, social media presence, and overall digital shrewdness to attract buyer and seller leads they will have a high likelihood of converting into new business.

The key to growing your leads database and nurturing your premier prospects to close like the best-of-the-best top producers do today is to enact a real-time real estate marketing strategy. This means you need to know how to:



EXPERTLY ATTRACT

your audience with detailed, search-friendly content you can publish on your website



ADEPTLY CAPTURE

site visitors' information and turn them into legitimate home buyer and seller leads



EFFICIENTLY NURTURE

your leads through your marketing funnel with informative and insightful content



PROFICIENTLY MANAGE

those prospects (i.e. grade and prioritize them) once they have entered your CRM

Remember that time is money — and you won't be able to accomplish any of these inbound marketing activities for your real estate business if you don't have the right mindset, approach, and resources in place. That's where this in-depth and insightful ebook comes into play.

In this exhaustive guide tailored specifically for you — the experienced real estate pro looking for any and every advantage they can get with their marketing and sales strategies — you'll discover the secrets to real-time marketing success: from the specific tactics that need to be part of your daily lead gen efforts and the perfect messaging to share with your audience, to the prime tools to use for your lead management and the most productive client conversion techniques to implement ASAP.

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Chapter 1:

Real-Time Marketing Explained for Agents

“Real-time marketing” may sound like a buzzword, but believe us when we say this is the present, and most definitely the future, of real estate marketing. Why? Because we live in a society in which consumers (see: your potential buyer and seller leads) want to connect with brands, gather information on them, learn about their products and services, and making buying decisions related to them in — you guessed it — real time.

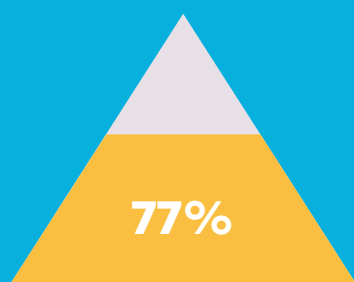
One component of real-time marketing that simplifies the brand research and decision-making phases for modern home buyers and sellers is the ongoing evolution of mobile. Smartphones and tablets continue to make it easier for these individuals to search their local markets for the right agent to represent their home sale and search external markets in which they intend to buy a residence.

Having said that, these folks will only check out agents’ IDX websites that are mobile-friendly, filled with invaluable information, and offer an intuitive search experience, so before you get your real-time strategy up and running, ensure your site looks and functions beautifully on iPhones, Androids, iPads, and other popular mobile devices.

Aside from making sure your website appears and operates perfect on mobile, you also need to put real-time marketing activities into play and ensure you're able to monitor and analyze those efforts with ease. Some of these core activities include, but are most definitely not limited to:

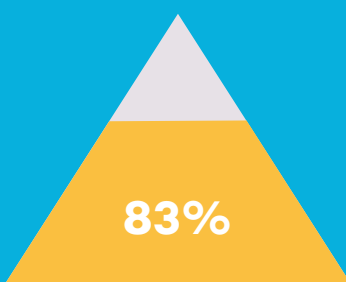
- **Engaging with your social media fans and followers immediately** after they comment on shares on your various social network accounts
- **Sharing resources**, like a home buyer's or seller's guide, via email to prospects who just filled out a lead capture form on your website
- **Contacting new leads** who just clicked one of your text or display ads online and opted to get a free buying or selling consultation from you.

To give you a sense of the importance of enacting a real-time blueprint for your real estate business and continuing to master the tactics and techniques that can support this type of marketing — including frequent content updates to your site, shares to your social media account, search-friendly ads, and emails to your primary audience — here are some of the latest and most revealing statistics on real-time marketing.



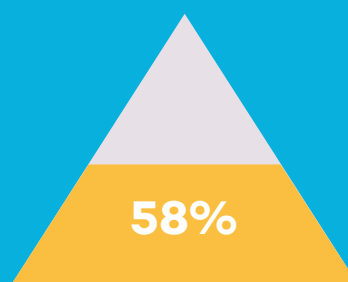
of marketing professionals say real-time marketing is crucial to their companies' success.

— Adobe/Direct Marketing Association



of B2C brands view real-time marketing as being able to respond to customer needs within minutes.

— Econsultancy/Monetate



of U.S. marketing professionals noted they use social media to engage with their customers and prospects in real-time.

— Wayin

While many of your real-time marketing activities will take place online, there is still the all-important offline component as well. For instance, when leads become leads online, you nurture and manage those prospects with digital tools like your lead management system and automated email campaigns ... but what do you do when your top leads show they're ready to make a decision regarding when they'll hit the market to tour listings or hire an agent to represent their home sale? No longer will your lead-nurturing collateral truly be effective in getting them to sign on with your agency, meaning this is the time when you need to be proactive and reach out to these prospects to close the deal.

Now, much of your real-time marketing will take place online, but a bulk of it will also happen beyond the scope of the internet — over the phone and in in-person meetings with potential clients. Thus, it's vital for you to plan in advance for this final stage of your marketing funnel accordingly and prepare print assets and a solid sales pitch you can present to your premier leads and, in turn, convince them you're the right real estate pro for the job. Some of the most vital things you need to do to ready yourself for this end-of-the-funnel, real-time marketing (well, and sales) approach include the 5 “A”s:



ANALYZE

where your buyer and seller prospects are in the marketing and sales cycle



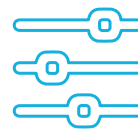
ASSESS

which of these top leads are worth contacting first to determine their needs



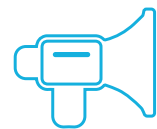
ASSERT

you're the right person to represent these individuals with a concrete sales pitch



ADJUST

your strategy when it doesn't close the quality or quantity of leads you prefer



AMPLIFY

your online and offline efforts to rectify your real-time marketing strategy

Now that you know the basics of real-time marketing, it's time to focus on the four specific stages of your marketing cycle — starting with getting prospects onto your website and engaging with these individuals once they convert into leads.

The Four Stages of Real-time Marketing



ATTRACT

Get your niche audience to visit — and keep visiting — your IDX website



CAPTURE

Turn your site visitors into bona fide leads using lead capture forms



NURTURE

Add leads to your CRM and move them through the funnel with email



MANAGE

Convert leads into clients and manage those relationships online

How to Attract High-Quality Buyer Leads with Your IDX Website

Watch our exclusive webinar to learn how you can attract more (and better) leads through your website today.



[WATCH NOW](#)

Chapter 2:

Attract Your Audience with Your IDX Website

Let's take a step back and talk about website optimization. No, we don't just mean developing a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy that gradually gains your site traction in search engines (mainly Google, because, let's be real: That's where the overwhelming majority of home searchers turn to today). That's certainly an important facet of of your overarching marketing plan, but it's just that: a single facet.

Real-time marketing in the form of constant content publication — like regularly posted articles, guides, and videos and live-streaming your day-to-day, local events, and consumer meetups — is another component that can elevate awareness of your agency to the people who really matter: aspiring home buyers scouring your local market and sellers in your community gearing up to list their properties.

We can already sense you ready to ask the ultimate question: “But how do I find the time to attract my audience when I’m conducting listing presentations, attending broker meetings, showing off listings, and conducting the myriad other tasks to build my business?” The answer is simple: Adopt a real-time marketing strategy that allows you to connect with your audience wherever and whenever with relative ease.

Engaging On the Go and Getting in Front of Your Audience

Think about how you spend your time out of the office. You have to meet with prospective seller clients to convince them you're the agent to represent their home sale. You meet with existing clients to update them on new offers or properties to show them. You showcase listings via open houses and private showings. In other words, you're all over the place, just trying to keep your work organized and on the path to closing more deals.

If you're like most full-time agents, though, there are most definitely pockets of downtime here and there you can use to continue your goal of increasing IDX website traffic, earning more social media followers, and promoting your brand to the world (well, your market at least). These are the periods when you can be more agile with your marketing and take advantage of a tool you have available with you wherever you are: your smartphone.

Some of the best ways to take advantage of your iPhone, Android, or other smartphone for your real-time marketing strategy include:



PHOTOS & VIDEOS

Chances are, you're like most people and enjoy posting regularly to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. If you want to get your audience interacting with your digital presence, take photos and videos of your listings and client meetups and capture random moments around town (e.g. visiting notable attractions).



LIVE STREAMS

If you have 15 minutes in between lead and client meetings, use Facebook Live or Periscope to show what you're up to at the moment. If you're at an open house, for example, give an online tour of sorts to highlight the residence and share your advice on how to design a home like the one in question.



BLOG POSTS

Who says you can only blog when sitting behind your desktop or laptop? Open up the notes feature in your smartphone or an app that allows for dictation, and share housing tips and tricks aloud into your device you can later edit for grammar and spelling (a must, given how auto-correct can misinterpret one's speech).

Build Your Branding with a Viable Video Strategy

When more than three-quarters of brands say that video marketing has had a direct impact on their businesses, you know it's a tool that real estate agents and brokers should use in their digital strategies — a lot. Remember that data from earlier that noted how most buyers start their home search online? What percentage of them do you think turn to videos to check out their local listings? We already know they love crisp, detailed, high-resolution photos of homes for sale, so you can imagine how short listing highlight clips that share all interesting and relevant property features would do to convince buyers to check out your listing (or prove to sellers you truly know how to market a property).

This all adds up to one thing: the paramount need for a comprehensive video production and promotion plan that elevates your brand awareness. Before you go out and buy \$500 or more worth of video production gear, editing software, lighting, and other accessories, turn to your mobile device(s) first. When it comes to real-time video marketing activities you can undertake with your smartphone or tablet, the options are seemingly limitless:

Conduct in-depth community and neighborhood tours:

Whether it's a live-stream you conduct while biking around downtown or carefully shot-and-spliced footage showcasing the premier areas of your city, aspiring buyers want to get a glimpse of the market in which they may buy.

Interview intriguing locals about...well...anything:

If you have 15 minutes in between lead and client meetings, use Facebook Live or Periscope to show what you're up to at the moment. If you're at an open house, for example, give an online tour of sorts to highlight the residence and share your advice on how to design a home like the one in question.

Host “fireside” chats at your office (or home office):

Conduct intimate conversations — anything from municipal changes of that affect local homeowners or a social issue area residents want to raise awareness of — you can host in-house with persons of interest to the topic at-hand.

Review restaurants and retail shops around town:

For those who factor food into their home search, provide in-depth, on-camera reviews of the finest dining establishments around: everything from dive bars to coffee shops) and add them to the blog.

Serve Up Some Stellar Content on Social Media

While your IDX website is the principal place to share your videos, don't forget the power of your social media accounts. Take YouTube, for example: With a user base of more than 1 billion people and the average user spending 40 minutes per session on the social network using their mobile devices, it's clear professionals and brands in just about every industry ought to spend a good portion of their time marketing on the site — and optimizing their content for the mobile experience.

The surefire secret to success on this outlet and the other big-time social players — chiefly, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest — is to develop a big-picture plan for promoting your agency and specific listings that accounts for your particular audience's wants, needs, and (unfortunately) attention spans. Yep: We live in the 21st-century — the digital age in which the people to whom you market your business not only want information instantaneously, but also in the most easily consumable format possible. This means you need to:

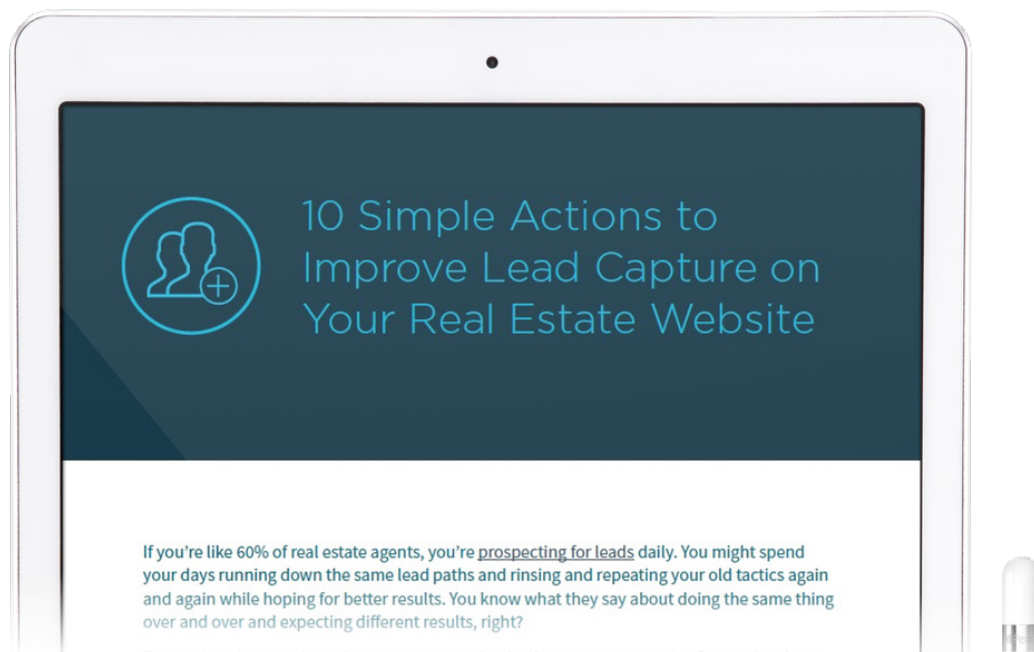
- **Craft compelling videos that get right to the point and don't drag on (2 minutes max!):** The average attention span of an internet user is 8 whole seconds. That means you don't have much time at all — even with targeted messaging/marketing — to get your point across to those who matter: potential leads and customers. So ...! don't waste any time! Explain what value viewers will get out of your video in the first few seconds and add as many appealing visuals as possible (without oversaturating your video) to ensure your audience watches from start to finish and gets to your all-important CTA (“Learn More,” “Call Now”).
- **Write up succinct social shares that offer links to the “real” content on your website:** Some users have railed (mostly silently) against Twitter in recent years for not updating its 140-character limit. While the social network eliminated images from its character count, allowing for 20-something more characters per tweet (woot, woot!), it still doesn't leave much room for expounding upon your point in each tweet — and that's okay. In fact, the brevity of Twitter can be your best friend, so long as you optimize your tweets with eye-grabbing copy a la every BuzzFeed post you've ever read (those cat-loving folks know how to earn a click, so learn from their headlines).

- **Add photos, images, and graphics that attract their attention away from the “noise”:**

Even if you’re not a savvy photographer with your smartphone and don’t know how else to snap stellar photos, there’s always an alternative available. Want a quick, cost-efficient option? Head to one of the seemingly endless number of stock photo sites around to find images for your shares. Want to a DIY, creative solution? Use graphic-creation tools like Canva, Photoshop, and Piktochart to create images for your social promotion. When listing pics aren’t applicable, just know you have plenty of options for making your shares look enticing to your fans and followers.

10 Simple Actions to Improve Lead Capture on Your Website

Use our free guide to enhance your IDX website and improve your lead generation strategy.



[LEARN MORE](#)

Chapter 3:

Capture Quality Leads Using Valuable Content

After allocating your initial marketing energy toward creating a considerable amount of content for your site — enough where you have several dozen unique pages (including blog posts) you can send your audience to — you can turn more of your attention away from your real-time marketing (not all of it, certainly) to optimizing these pages for lead capture.

Without a concerted lead gen plan for your IDX site, all of that content you crafted will be almost all for naught. Sure, you may get some sporadic emails without a lead capture strategy for your site and the occasional phone call from interested buyers and sellers who came across a page of yours in Google, but the data shows lead capture forms are the ultimate means of generating the majority of your highest-quality leads online.

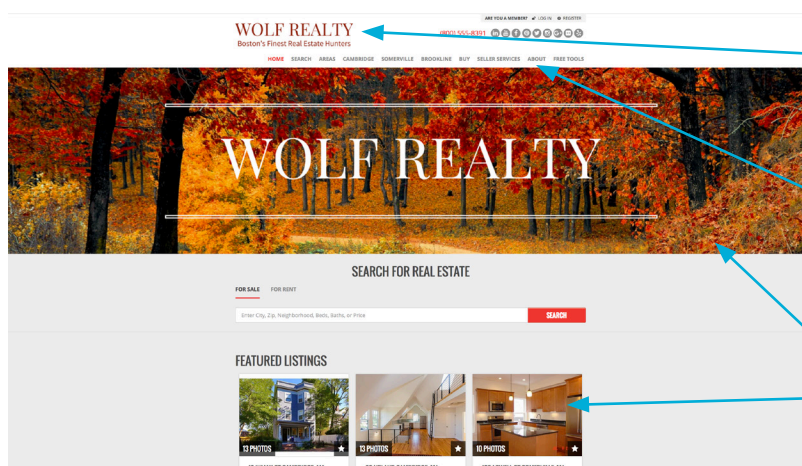
Portals like Zillow, Trulia, and Realtor.com and ad services like AdWords are also important elements of your overall real estate marketing mix and, thus, are channels you should use as part of your digital efforts. Having said that, you can earn leads for a substantially lower price simply by creating the aforementioned content, adding those assets to your site, promoting them like hell across all available outlets (hint: email!), and — most importantly — implementing active, passive, and/or aggressive lead capture forms on each and every page of your site.

It All Starts with Your Agency's Contact Information

It may sound pretty obvious, but one of the most important elements of your real estate website — and most important factors in the success of your real-time marketing strategy — is branding. No, we're not talking about an aesthetically alluring logo and other branded visuals, but rather the actual information about your brand that you incorporate from top to bottom and on every single page. Your name, agency name, phone number(s), email address(es), social media buttons, office address, and other core details about your business need to be front and center on your IDX site.

Moreover, you need to explain your value proposition in the header and footer of your site pages to remind your audience of the exact kind of agent you are: Buyer's Rep Extraordinaire, Luxury Selling Expert — however you want to be perceived by your audience, make sure it's spelled out crystal clear on every page so it's certain your site visitors can't miss it, even if they tried. This may seem like overkill and over-promotion of your brand, and this makes sense. After all, visitors who see this are already on your site, which is a good sign. However, you need to display yourself to the world in one, convincing, uniform fashion, and this strategy can help keep you top of mind with visitors and leads long after they leave your site.

Here's what an ideal homepage header for each page of your real estate website should look like in terms of branding for your business.



Brand name, tagline, logo, and contact info prominent atop the page

List of business details: Sales history, certifications, and other social proof

Attractive images highlighting your value prop, local listings, and clients

5 Keys to Convincing Calls to Action on Your Site

Regardless of whether your niche audience views your stunning real estate website on mobile or desktop, you need to ensure it features at least one compelling call to action on every page ... and creating these strong CTAs begins with having the right site in place.

The beauty of ready-out-of-the-box IDX website solutions is they afford you the chance to make easily executable customizations without the need for modern site design savvy and optimize them with a variety of CTAs attached to lead capture forms and other page areas. While it's a big plus to have the peace of mind of having these features, there's still work to be done on your end — specifically in regard to crafting CTA copy that entices your visitors to learn more about your history, services, team, and value prop.

Here are five of the most common (and effective) messages you ought to include on each site page that can influence your audience to request more info, download free resources, schedule a consultation, or take another action related to your real estate business that'll allow you to, in turn, apply some real-time marketing tactics that can move them into your marketing funnel:

1. “Sign Up for My Free Newsletter for Buyers/Sellers”

Depending on whom you serve — home buyers or sellers (or even renters, for that matter) — you'll want to tailor any CTA associated with email subscriptions (it may sound weird saying people subscribe to your emails like an ecommerce brand, but it's true) to your niche audience.

2. “Click to Schedule a 1-Hour Selling Consultation”

Home buyers, new and experienced, tend to have an easier time scouring listings online on their own than sellers do trying to plan to put their residence on the market. Thus, offering your time and resources to locals looking to offload their properties is always an ideal marketing play on your site.

3. “Download My Free Home Seller's/Buyer's Guide”

There are certainly buyers and sellers who feel comfortable navigating the process of purchasing or listing a home without the help of a professional such as yourself. Having said that, you can still provide value — and get your brand name in front of them — with resources like these.

4. “Register to Join My Next [Market Name] Meetup”

Whether you decide to host a gathering of locals at your office or rent space to host a meetup to chat over wine and cheese with your top leads and/or past clients, you can gain a lot from face-to-face time with your audience, so offer them the chance to meet you in person.

5. “Get the Latest Listings In Your Inbox Each Week”

The central goal for buyer's agents is to find people looking to purchase in their markets who land on their sites and express interest in homes for sale featured there. Many buyers don't have time to search for listings, though, so make it easy for them to catch up on the latest homes to hit the market in weekly digests featuring the top new properties.

Find Out How You Can Become a Real Estate Marketing Superstar

Learn how several of the real estate industry's top producers market their brands — and how you can emulate their success with your own online strategy.



[LEARN MORE](#)

Chapter 4:

Nurture and Manage Leads with Modern Tools

After optimizing your real estate website with stellar messaging (click-worthy calls to action), appropriate lead capture forms (ones related to the page on which they exist), and captivating content (local market pages with local market keywords and local market info), your nurturing activities start to come into play for prospects who convert through your site (or some other online means).

Since you're **likely out of the office the bulk of the time**, working with existing clients and performing the countless other duties associated with being a 21st-century real estate pro, you need to be as agile as possible with your lead nurturing. To accomplish this, you must be savvy with your automated marketing and understand when manual messaging is required — a delicate balance that requires great attention to detail and a willingness to often go the extra mile.

What's more is you also need a lead management system with all the bells and whistles that makes adding, organizing, scoring, and prioritizing your prospects a cinch — meaning you can keep tabs on them, add tasks and reminders pertaining to them, and contact them through a modern, mobile app right on your smartphone.

Lead Nurturing Emails to Promote Your Brand

As noted in the lead capture section, you can and should offer a wealth of information, insights, and resources for your audience they can tap into to become better-informed buyers and sellers and, hopefully, turn to you at the end of the day for their buying and selling needs. That's all well and good, of course ... but it still requires you to actually, you know, nurture the leads you earn from those CTA clicks and form fillouts. Thankfully, it's pretty simple to gradually educate your prospects in real-time and move them through your funnel. The secrets? Be yourself, and be there for them at all times.

Let's start with authenticity. Think about the way you act around friends, family, and other loved ones: You act natural, joke around, tell stories, and are completely relatable. That's the exact same way you should approach your lead nurturing efforts. Here's an example of an email you can share to leads who just became as such after filling out a form on your IDX website earlier in the day to set up a listing presentation.

New Message

lead@realestateagency.com

Subject

Hey [Lead name here],

First off, thanks for visiting the [Agency name here] website! We've worked with sellers like you for ages and have helped many residents in the [Market name here] area list their homes — and get tremendous value for them. We'd love to do the same for you!

Click on my personal calendar here to select a time and date on which I can present our agency's history, value, and specific plan for your home sale, and we'll get the ball rolling so you can sell your home in no time! I look forward to chatting with you. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out!

Best,
[Your name here]

Send

This is just one example of how you can nurture (and, in time, convert) your real estate leads with relative ease. The trick to ensuring this type of message resonates as much as possible with your prospects, though, is to send this automated email off mere minutes following the moment they become leads. That way, you remain top of mind with them and prove you're attentive and willing to help.

If prospects follow up with you after an email like this one (in which case, nicely done), just be sure to manually follow up with your response ASAP — the “be-there-at-all-times” element of your lead nurturing strategy. The last thing you want to do is leave your lead high and dry, so even if they contact you late at night, make the time to chat with them or, at the very least, offer a specific time in which you can get back to them.

Manage Your Leads Database with a Modern CRM

Ahhh, the end of the marketing funnel — where you can see the light at the end of the tunnel (a.k.a. your best leads on the verge of converting into new clients). It's a good feeling when you are on the cusp of generating new customers or, in the best of cases, earn new business after a few weeks (or even months) of nurturing your prospects. However, if you don't have the right lead management system in place to score and prioritize your leads and clients, your hard work won't lead to higher lead conversion and more closed deals. In fact, the lack of a modern customer relationship management (CRM) tool can be detrimental for your bottom line.

Thankfully, you have options for your CRM needs. The ideal solution for your agency is one that not only offers the ability to do the aforementioned tasks for your leads and clients, but also allows you to effortlessly plan out your communications with them, track needs and requests, and ensure you're able to easily get in touch with them. The three main features to look for in the optimal lead management platform for your business are:



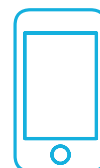
THE ABILITY TO EASILY ADD AND ORGANIZE LEADS

The primary purpose of a CRM is to allow users (you) to easily and quickly create lead profiles chock-full of all of the relevant info related to the contacts in question — name, address, email, phone number, designation (buyer vs. seller), and specific housing needs/wants. Look for a solution that makes this process simple and allows you to flesh out these profiles in seconds.



TASK AND REMINDER CREATION FOR CONTACTS

You may have a pretty sound organizational method for nurturing leads and contacting clients, but having several apps and tools to do this can make things quite hectic for you. The solution? Turn to a CRM that makes it easy to set up tasks and reminders associated with all of your contacts. Notifications that pop up on your phone or computer can allow you to better nurture and manage your leads and clients.



A MOBILE APP FOR WHEN YOU'RE "ON THE GO"

The world, as you already know full well, has gone mobile. That means you need a CRM that's available to the device of choice you use (and keep within 3 feet of yourself at all times) so you can conveniently check in on the status of your prospects and clients even when you're away from your PC or out of home or the office.

Check Out Additional Placester Resources

EBOOKS

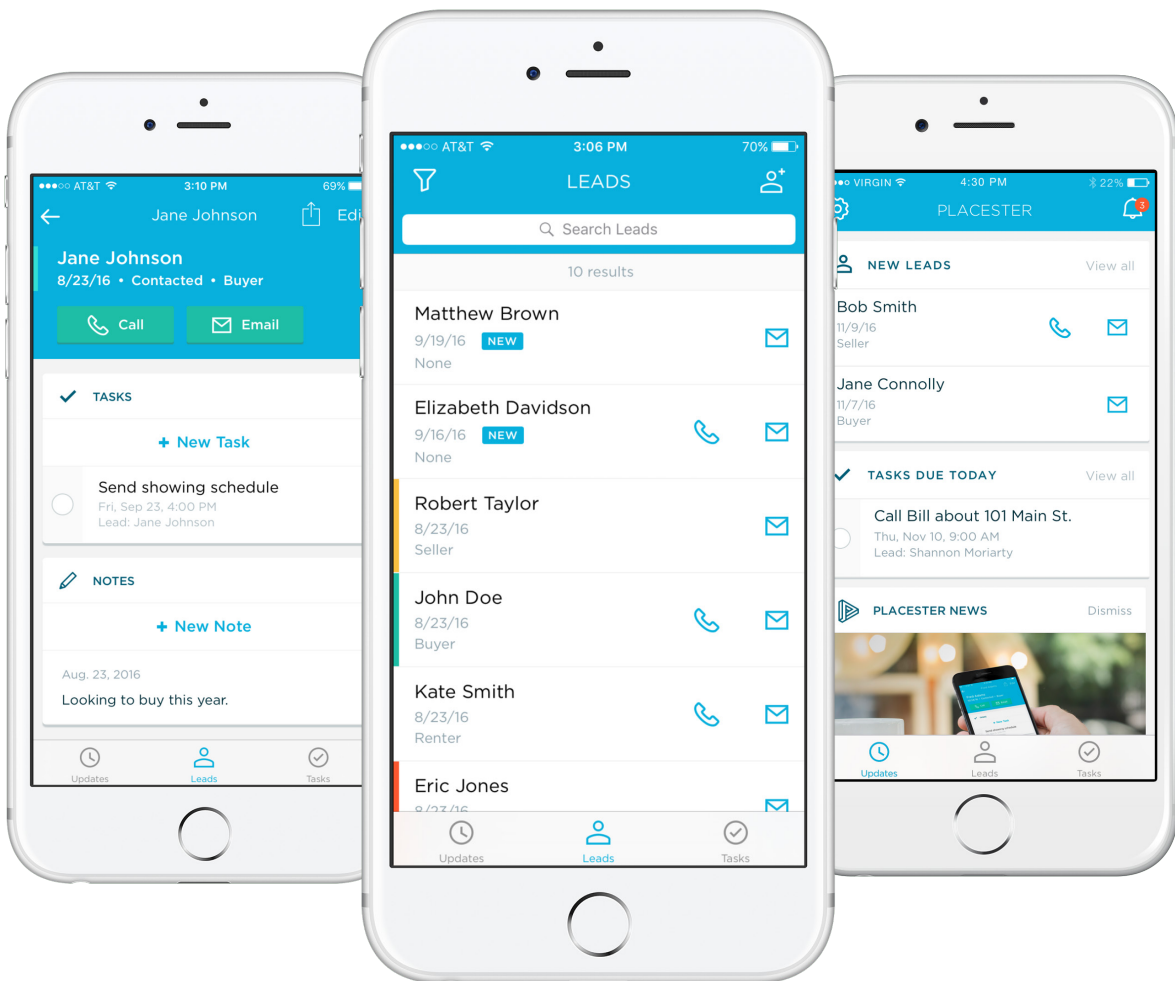
- [Launch Your Real Estate Marketing Mix](#)
- [10 Simple Actions to Improve Lead Capture on Your Real Estate Website](#)
- [Become a Real Estate Marketing Superstar](#)
- [The Ultimate Guide to Real Estate Blogging for Agents](#)
- [The Beginner's Guide to Being a Real Estate Agent](#)

WEBINARS

- [Placester Walkthrough: Tour Our Real Estate Marketing Solution](#)
- [How to Attract High-Quality Leads with Your IDX Website](#)
- [5 Necessary Modern Lead Gen Tactics for Real Estate](#)
- [Leveraging Your Brand to Earn New Leads with Placester's Seth Price](#)
- [Using Social Proof to Generate and Nurture Leads with RealSatisfied's Jeff Turner](#)
- [Designing Your Website for Conversion with BrandCo's Ken Granger](#)
- [Mastering the Art of Lead Nurturing with Century 21 Redwood Realty's Billy Ekofo](#)
- [Earning New Business with Email with BombBomb's Steve Pacinelli](#)
- [Creating a Winning Content Strategy with The Weiniger Group's Judy Weiniger](#)

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