

The Art of Building a Lead-Generating Real Estate Website: **A 10-Step Guide for Agents**



Introduction

The ease with which real estate agents and brokers can generate online leads today far surpasses the massive effort needed in the past to earn new leads through offline promotional. Since the overwhelming majority of **Millennials and Generation X members use online search to research homes** for sale and agents, it's really no secret any longer that going digital — a.k.a. having a strong online presence, starting with a stellar website — is an absolute must of industry professionals such as yourself.

That's not to say outbound marketing tactics like direct mailers and newspaper ads don't have some place in a modern real estate pro's repertoire of marketing activities. However, these endeavors should now be considered an afterthought or bonus marketing option for aspiring top producers. In their place is a variety of effective, digital means with which they can produce new prospects to nurture — including and especially their IDX websites.

If you're looking to not only get going with a real estate website of your own that's simple to set up, but also one that can actually aid your numerous marketing goals — specifically, lead generation — we've got some ideas that can help. Discover how you can craft an IDX site that looks sleek and chic, features rich content for your audience, offers a modern search experience, and helps you achieve your lead gen objectives with relative ease with our 12-step guide below.

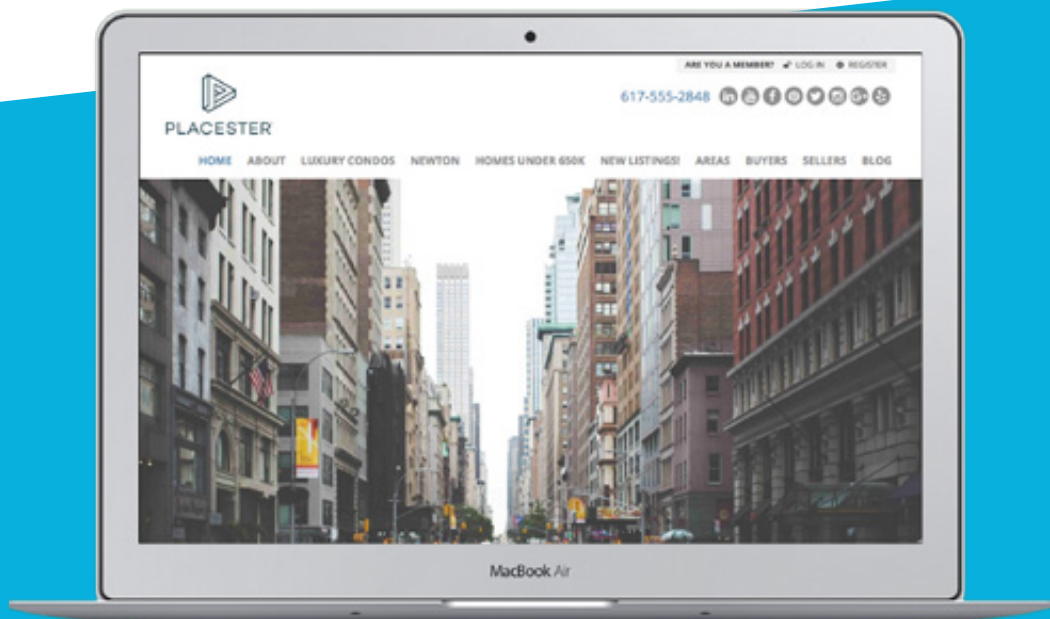
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1. Secure an easy-to-optimize, responsive website that offers ready-to-go site themes.

It may sound obvious, but you can't grow your business online without — you guessed it — a real estate website. We're not talking about just any site, of course: We mean a feature-rich, user-friendly site that makes it simple for you to create new pages, add your branding, and share brand info and looks great (a.k.a. is easily readable and searchable) on desktops, smartphones, and tablets.

The **best real estate websites offer pre-made site templates** that offer a relatively unique theme you can, at the very least, slightly customize aesthetically (e.g. with your distinct brand logo), the ability to showcase listings from your MLS on your site in the form of a unique IDX feed (more on that below), and come pre-loaded with the basic functionality needed to offer a premier user experience for visitors and to turn those visitors into leads (another topic we'll cover in just a bit).



2. Connect your Google Analytics account and CRM to our website to track its performance.

Explain your history and background with a robust “about” page. Once you’ve procured your IDX website, it’s time to connect it with arguably the two most important software platforms for your real estate business: Google Analytics and whichever customer relationship management (CRM) system you use.



Let’s start with the former. In short, Google Analytics allows you to monitor each and every facet of your website with amazing ease: from how many new and returning visitors you receive daily, to which pages those visitors check out most frequently and for the longest periods of time. The data platform is certainly robust with its countless reporting options available to users, but don’t let that scare you. **Just focus on the primary site metrics you need to track routinely**

to determine how well your pages perform, and use that information to a) adjust the pages in question with better content or keywords (something will dive into shortly) or b) eliminate any “weak” pages altogether if they don’t seem to gain any traction, even with modifications.

Regarding your CRM software, **the best ones allow you to track leads generated from your website** on both your computer and mobile devices — the latter of which makes it simple to manage prospects while on the go — and helps you identify where all of your leads are in your marketing and sales funnel (e.g. new leads are generally at the top of your funnel, while prospect you’ve nurtured for weeks or months are closer to the bottom and, in turn, conversion). Syncing this system with your site should also pose few, if any, problems, so ensure the application you use seamlessly works in harmony with your site so you can view all relevant lead activity at a glance whenever and wherever.

3. Integrate your own IDX feed to your website so you can share only the listings you want featured.

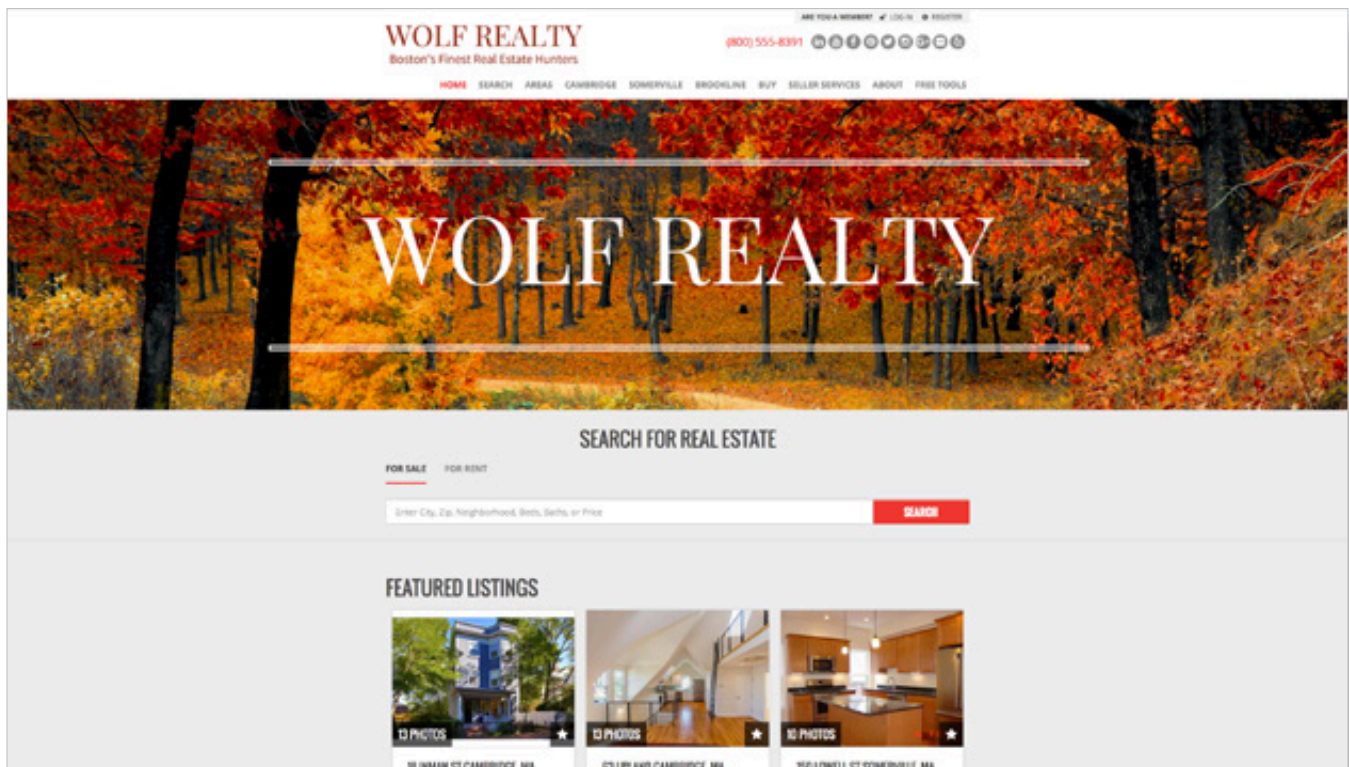
As noted, creating your own IDX feed by syncing local, noteworthy, and pertinent MLS listings to your website is paramount to generating high-quality leads from your site. Why? Because you don't want to share every, single listing in and around your housing market to your site visitors. Rather, you want a much more meticulously curated list of homes for sale in your area featured on your homepage and niche IDX listing pages (e.g. ones for homes above a certain price point or in certain neighborhoods) that will simplify the search experience for your visitors.

Once this integration is fully completed, you will be able to have the most recent, applicable listings highlighted on your website that your audience will, presumably, find useful. You may need to occasionally tinker with the types of listings you feature site-wide, if you find the ones you generally showcase don't generate the clicks and leads you desire. For instance, if you find most visitors tend to click or favorite high-end listings rather than homes below \$500,000, you might as well start featuring more of these luxury properties and fewer of the lesser-priced residences.



4. Map out how you want your website to look: from the pages included to visual branding.

Okay, so you've taken care of the bare-bones, must-have essentials of your real estate website. That means much of the nitty-gritty work is done and over with. Now, you can turn your attention to constructing the actual site — that is, deciding what kinds of copy you will actually incorporate across your site and how its navigation will be structured.



Sure, it's pretty well established that, nowadays, you need the basic website pages to succeed with your online marketing — particularly lead. Having said that, there's much more

that goes into building a digital, lead-generating machine than just your homepage and blog. In fact, there are a handful of pages that many agents neglect to include on their sites that can diminish their ability to earn new prospects from them, including:



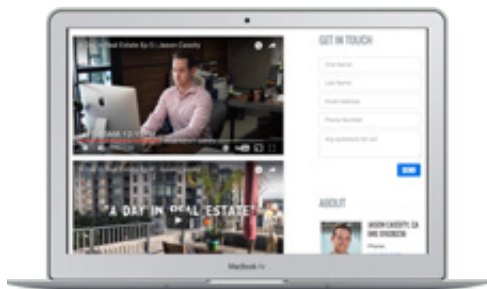
Area Pages:

Describe specific neighborhoods within your market and include their most interesting attributes: the best schools, the most popular parks, the tastiest restaurants, and other hot spots around town.



Testimonials Page:

Social proof like this is not only a phenomenal way to show you know how to get the job done for clients, but it also exhibits your willingness to go the extra mile to prove your worthiness to prospective leads.



Resources Page:

In addition to offering one-on-one meetings and calls to convince site visitors to fill out lead capture forms, you can also provide how-to guides and market reports to spur your audience to convert.



Home Valuation Page:

Potential sellers need to know just how valuable their home is in relation to their micro-market, so why not give them a free, handy tool that can give them insights into their home value within seconds?



IDX Pages:

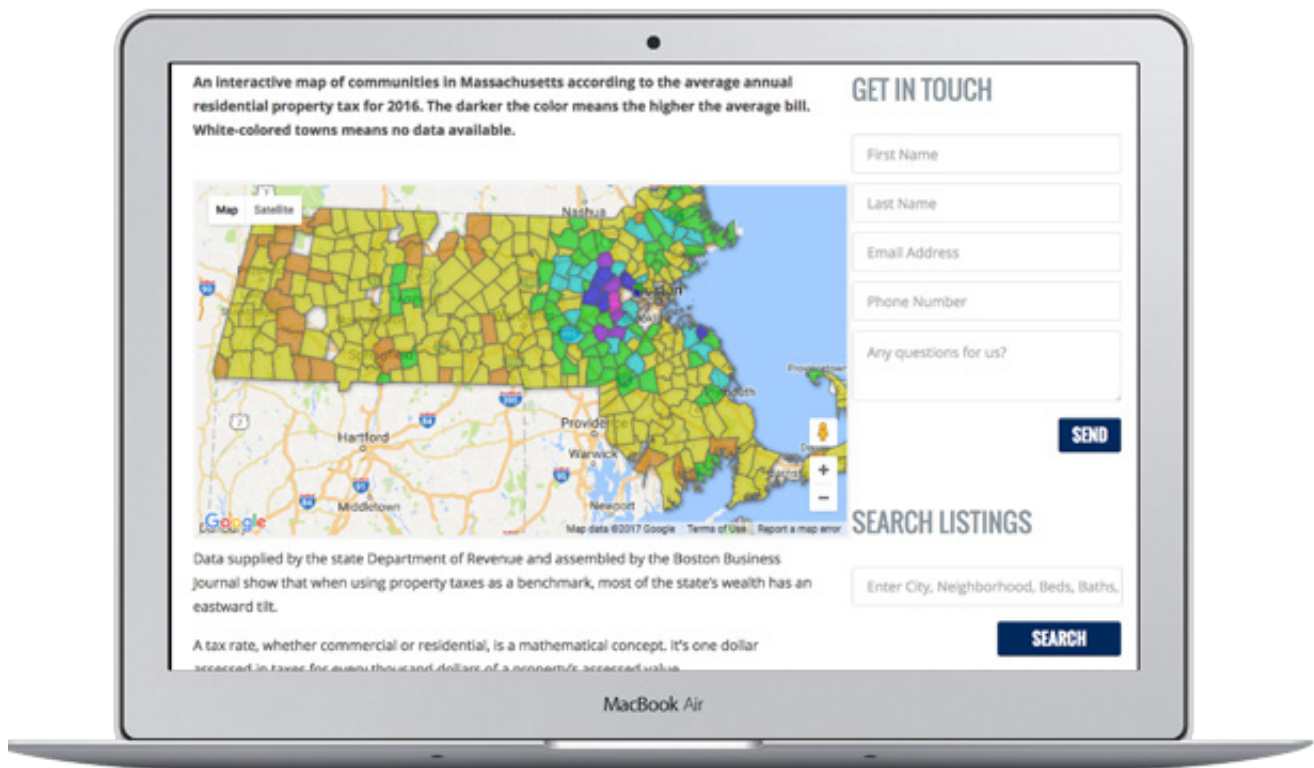
Arguably the best way to secure new leads on your real estate website, these specialty pages make it easy for possible buyers to check out homes on the market, favorite the most applicable ones, and keep track of their listing search history.

5. Craft content for all pages (and many blog posts for) of your website before it goes “live.”

First, write out your agency’s mission statement, value proposition,

sales history, industry certifications and designations, and just about any other explanatory copy you can think of that can give those who know nothing about you a detailed-but-brief description that can relay what you do in less than about 300 words. This will make up the majority of your “about” page and even serve as the boilerplate language you can use to explain your business on social media and to people you meet on the job and in your personal life. It may not seem like content that will boost your lead gen numbers considerably, but think about it: Do you buy from brands you know nothing about? We didn’t think so.

Next, **secure feedback from your happiest clients of the past.** You can make this ask of them in any number of ways: personalized emails, catch-up phone calls, or even carefully crafted Facebook messages. Whatever medium you use, just be sure to thank your customers for agreeing to help you out and provide every last detail regarding what you need from them (e.g. answer a brief survey on what they think about your business, be interviewed on camera at your office for 20 minutes, etc.). This social proof, when presented in a clear, thoughtful manner, will prove fruitful in your efforts to convince site visitors you’re the premier agent to represent them — and get them to fill out lead capture forms.



Finally, write up around a dozen blog posts and area pages you can publish once the aforementioned pages are good to go. For your blog, develop a mix of step-by-step buying and selling articles for your audience (depending on your industry niche), housing market updates (get data from your REALTOR Association, local municipality, or trade group), and news about the latest goings-on nearby (e.g. upcoming festivals, new bar openings, family-friendly activities in the area).

As for area pages, simply list out all neighborhoods in your market, learn all about them, then turn that info into original copy you can share on your site. Videos of these aspects of your market will bolster your lead gen chances even more so, so whip out your smartphone and start shooting away to capture footage of every facet of each neighborhood and provide some unique narration.

6. Add this initial copy to your website and optimize each page and post with relevant keywords.

All of this copy is certainly essential to attracting and generating high-quality real estate leads online. . . but without a concrete search engine optimization (SEO) strategy, you likely won't get nearly as much traffic as you desire. To prevent this from happening, it's best to conduct routine keyword research.

Let's take a step back, before delving into the specifics of implementing an SEO plan. First, don't be scared! Some agents hear terms like "SEO" and "long-tail keywords" and run away. However, it's not that difficult (or terrifying) of an endeavor to undertake. All it requires is knowing which tools to use and developing a process. Here's how you can begin researching keywords for your real estate website:

- 1. Head to Google Keyword Planner.** It's free, and, though intended to help brands and professionals create ads in AdWords, is actually extremely helpful in determining the monthly search volume for keywords in your area that relate to your business.
- 2. Think about your real estate niche.** Then, enter terms associated with this niche in the Keyword Planner (while selecting your particular local market, since you only need to know the terms' search popularity in your area) and jot down their search volume.
- 3. After doing this several dozen times (yep, you need that many keywords for your site), bucket the keywords into different groups based on their focus.** For instance, you can segment groups by neighborhood, listing type (e.g. "homes for sale," "apartments for rent"), or another classification.

Once this initial research is done, you have the long-tail keywords needed to ensure your website can (feasibly) get found in search results. Now, it's just a matter of assigning the right keyword groups to the applicable pages. There's **much more to SEO than keyword implementation** — for instance, search-optimized meta tags in titles for each page and post is vital — but this is the first, and most important, step to take to continually and gradually enhance your site's visibility in search engine results pages and getting prospective clients on your site.



59% of B2C marketers actively conduct regular keyword research to enhance their websites' search ranking.
— **Content Marketing Institute**



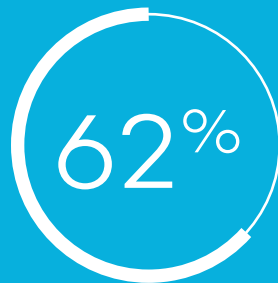
B2C brands that blog 11+ times monthly earn 4 times more leads than those who blog just 4-5 times monthly.
— **HubSpot**



77% of B2C marketing professionals said they produced more content during 2016 than they did during 2015.
— **Contently**



42% of brands say website access and content downloads are the two most popular tactics to email list growth.
— **Ascend2**



Content marketing costs 62% less than traditional marketing activities and earns brands 3 times more leads.
— **DemandMetric**



74% of small businesses have a website lead conversion optimization strategy in place to boost lead gen.
— **ConversionXL**

7. Plan out future real estate website content by creating a comprehensive editorial calendar.

All of the aforementioned IDX website content you need to create to secure lots of buyer and/or seller leads online isn't just a one-time activity.

Rather, it's paramount to keep the content coming — optimally, with one new page or post each week.

Before you say, “I just don't have the time to write,” think about this: Brands that map out their customer journey and create custom content tailored specifically for their niche audiences

earn nearly eight times more unique website visitors than brands that don't, according to Aberdeen. That means there is a legitimate return on investment (ROI), as long as you put the effort in to write, optimize, and publish high-quality content to your site frequently.

That's not to say you have to divert your attention from other core business activities like hosting listing presentations and open houses just to fit content creation into your schedule. Instead, it simply means you need to reevaluate all lead gen tactics you conduct and compare them to the potential success of content marketing. Chances are, you'll realize content can and should play a much bigger role in your marketing — and can be **created relatively easily and quickly with a versatile content strategy**.

So, plan out your content for the weeks (and even months) ahead with an ever-changing editorial calendar where you can add in rough and specific ideas for assets to create and schedule time to develop them. You can always move things around, delete ideas, and revise ones to improve them. The important thing is to get this process off the ground so you can become a better content marketer — and lead generator — for the long haul.

8. Add a lead capture form to each real estate website page you deem worthy of having one.

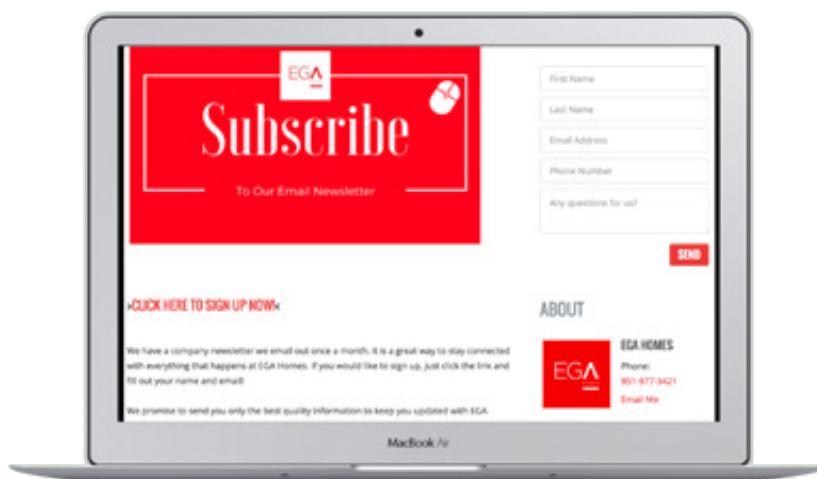
Now we get to the actual website functionality that will directly help your lead generation goals. Lead capture

forms come in many shapes and sizes. Passive forms, for instance, can pop up after a certain number of site visits or certain amount of time spent on your site.

Aggressive forms, meanwhile,

can pop up moments after visitors land on your site. There's no one right type of form to implement, but the best way to determine the right one for your site is to test these different options over time. Try one kind one month, then mix it up the next. Compare the lead totals earned from these forms, and it'll be evident which one's the winner.

Beside the form type, it's also imperative to consider the reasons you offer forms site-wide. For example, you'll likely want to have forms that offer a freebie of some kind. This could be an offer for a free buying or selling consultation, the chance to get a private listing showing, or the opportunity to download an exhaustive content resource that can better inform them about how to purchase or list a residence. Whatever you choose to offer, just be sure it's clear in the form header what you're offering. Without short, straightforward calls to action (CTAs), you may not achieve the **lead capture numbers you desire from your IDX site.**



9. Create (or hire someone to produce) high-quality videos and photos to share site-wide.

Allow site visitors to set up meetings with you with a consultation page.

Data from video creation service Animoto shows **more than three-quarters of brands to implement a video marketing strategy** saw a direct impact from their efforts. That's a sizable number of businesses to see big benefits from posting videos to their websites and video-sharing platforms. . . and you can be a part of this group by doing the same.

Whenever you create new blog articles or downloadable collateral, think of how you can turn those assets into recordings. Then, create an outline (and script, if you so desire) and film away. You don't always need a fancy camera and professional lighting and sound equipment to **craft amazing-looking**



(and lead-generating) real estate videos. All you need is 30 minutes here and there to shoot clips at open houses, in your office, and elsewhere on the job.

Once edited and fine-tuned, you can embed those videos on your site, publish them to your YouTube channel, and reap the rewards (hint: new leads!). There are **dozens of videos you can create for your agency**, so examine the efficacy of each, plan out time to produce them, and promote them heavily to get targeted traffic to your site. Speaking of promotion. . .

10. Actively promote your website pages and posts via social media, email, and ads.

Whereas your SEO efforts are the “long game,” so to speak — that is, your strategy will help you generate lots of organic traffic over a matter of years — promoting your site content directly to your network through personalized emails, in-depth social shares, and even intricately targeted ads is the best means for near-term lead generation.

Your email campaigns will, in all likelihood, be the premier method for not only earning brand new leads (e.g. someone on your list receives the email and sends you a referral lead by forwarding the email), but also qualifying existing leads and, in turn, turning them into what’s often referred to as a sales- or marketing-qualified lead (SQL and MQL, respectively). Leads can be ascribed these titles when they take consistent action on your site often. For instance, those who favorite a few listings and download a resource are often more likely to convert than a person who reads one blog post and never returns to your site.

After focusing on email promotion, spend your marketing energy on social media and advertisements. Facebook is your best bet for real estate lead gen success, given you can gain new leads through both organic posts and paid shares. There is a wealth of guides that can **help you get going with Facebook ads** and make the most of them, so that’s your best place to start.

If these ads don’t produce the results you crave (or simply want to double down on ads), AdWords is another viable advertising avenue to take. Use the same Keyword Planner you use to build your SEO keyword list and use those terms for ads targeted to your primary demographic.

Conclusion: Create and promote detailed, relevant content often to earn quality leads.

At the end of the day, it's all about content: brainstorming lots of interesting ideas, moving forward with the best ones, actually producing these assets, optimizing them for search, and promoting them like crazy across all of your online (and even offline) marketing channels.

You may have found a comfort zone with your offline, outbound marketing tactics — heck, many top-producing agents and brokers today still lean on direct mailers to generate more brand awareness and leads. The fact of the matter, though, is a **modern, inbound real estate marketing strategy** is now the preeminent way to bolster your lead gen goals, as you can more intricately target your audience online and get many of the right types of leads — in other words, those who have a very high likelihood to convert — and better nurture and manage those leads through the marketing and sales cycle. So step up your marketing game and focus on building a high-converting website today.

You're just one 10-step process away from enhancing your bottom line.

Watch Our Exclusive Marketing Webinar

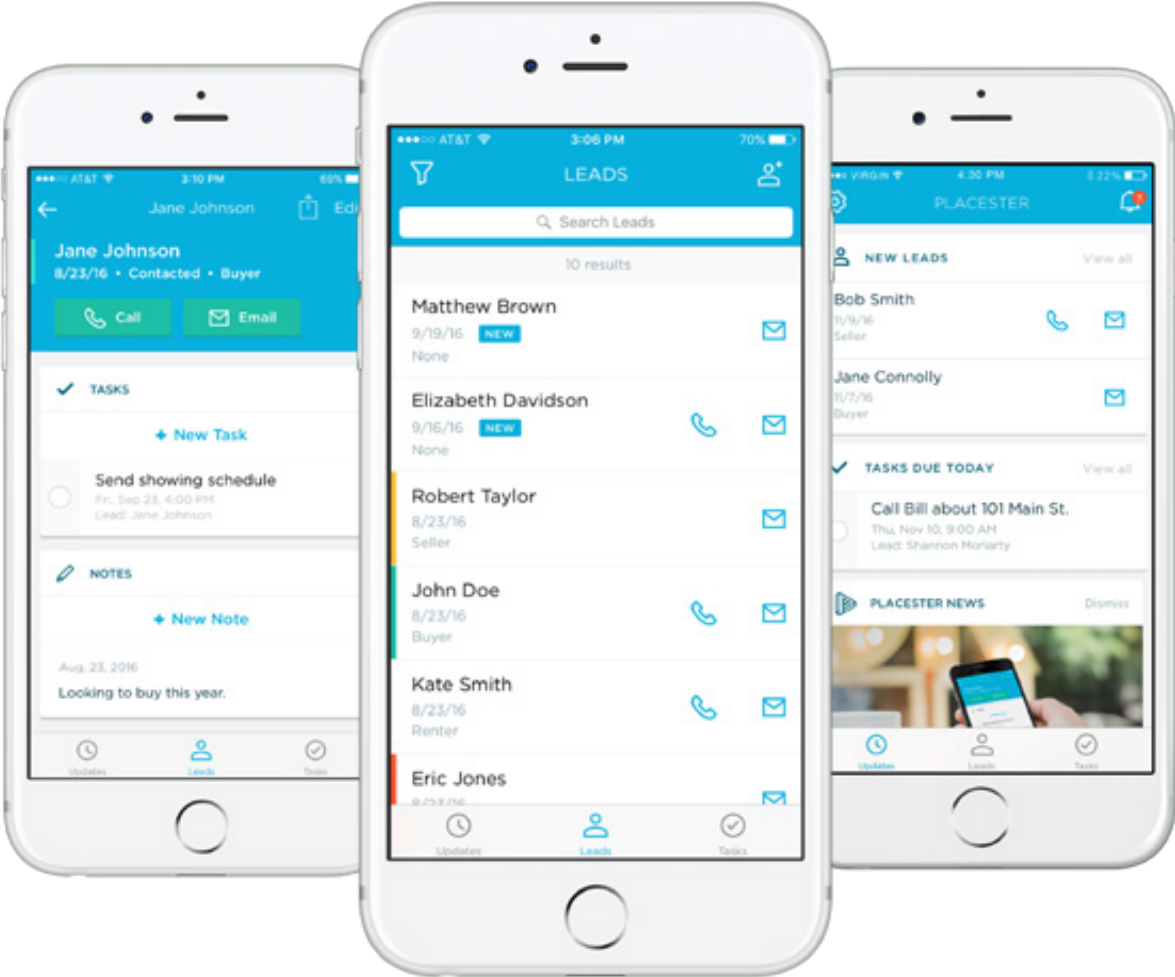
Check out our **“10 Lead-Generating Pages for Your Real Estate Website”** webinar to discover how you can optimize your IDX site for lead capture today so you can improve your bottom line tomorrow.



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