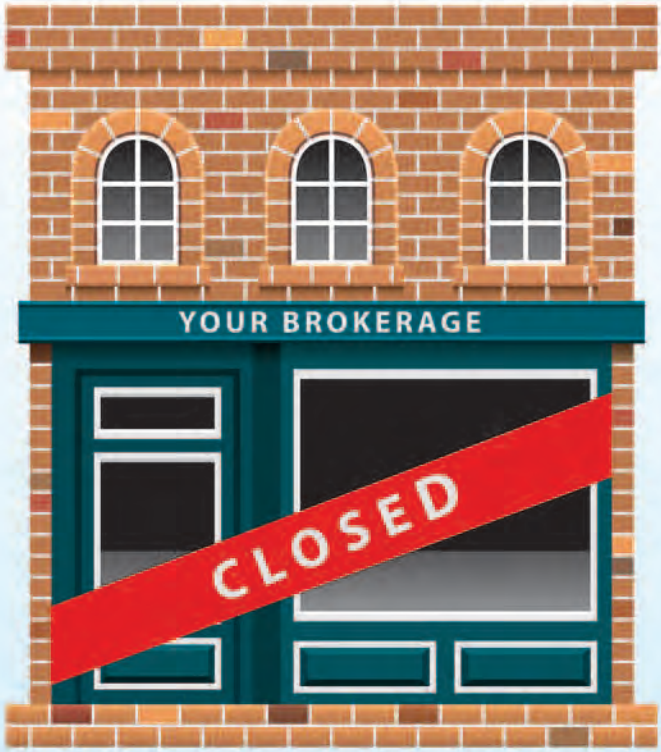
REAL Trends
The Trusted Source

2013 Online Performance Study

by Travis Saxton with contributing authors
Bob Bill and Paul Salley

foreword by Steve Murray

www.realtrends.com



Is Your Facebook® Closed for Business?

We all know that feeling. You look up a company and their Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn page haven't been updated in months - or worse yet, they don't have one at all. The first thought that goes through your head is "Are they still in business?"

But consistently posting great content to attract buyers, sellers and new agents is expensive, and worse yet, a major hassle.

We make it easy

Have your social media accounts managed daily by professional social media experts for a tiny fraction of the cost of hiring someone in your office. Our team has created nearly 1,000,000 individual posts for our thousands of Broker and Realtor clients across the country. Come find out how we're making their social media easy.

Get CityBlast now for **only $199/month**, and get back in business.

Use promo code ***"REAL"*** at CityBlast.com and get a **FREE*14-day trial AND15% discount for LIFE.***

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Social Media Listing Service™

REAL *Trends* 2013 Online Performance Study
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About us: REAL *Trends* has been The Trusted Source of news, analysis, and information on the residential brokerage industry since 1987. We are a privately-held publishing, communications, consulting company based in Castle Rock, Colorado. Residential real estate leaders look to us for timely and trusted information and analysis through our monthly newsletter, updates, conferences and publications.

In addition to research studies, we are a leading provider of high-level business consulting services to the residential real estate industry. We provide a wide range of advisory services to an international clientele of local, regional, and national real estate organizations. Our areas of expertise include operational analysis, valuations, merger and acquisition advisory service, consumer and business research, and strategic planning.

For more information, contact REAL *Trends*, Inc. directly at (303) 741-1000 or realtrends@realtrends.com or visit us at www.realtrends.com.

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INTRODUCTION

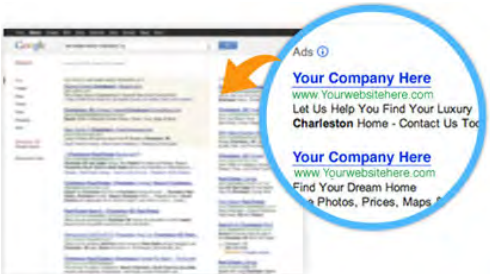
Welcome to the 2013 Online Performance Study produced by REAL ***Trends***. The 3rd annual edition of the report is receiving a drastic makeover. In past years we collected, analyzed and interpreted mostly data from brokerage Google Analytics accounts. While we had great deductions from the data we were limited in the grand scheme of things to just the time period when the visitor was on the website. Last year, we paired that data with a phone survey to reach a few more elaborate conclusions on what was or wasn't working for brokerages. The new Online Performance Study in 2013 features so much more. Not only have we collected the same data in the past but we have gathered data from 3rd party companies like mobile developers, CRM technology companies and so much more. We are now able to piece together the whole lifecycle of online lead generation through to interaction and conversion.

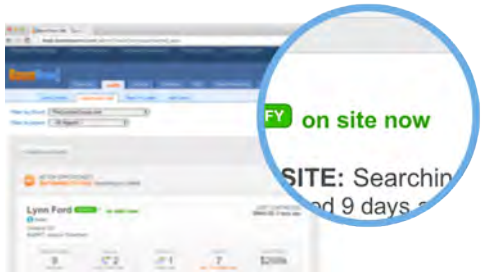
Through our REAL ***Trends*** technology consulting practices we realized that brokers and agents alike want data more now than ever, but want it in an easy to digest format. This is the basis of the structure of our new report. We will be delivering trends, new strategies, basic fundamentals, and much more related to online real estate performance. The report features information for both brokers and real estate sales professionals. Be sure to check out the enhanced mobile section, the upgraded social media section, and the new online consumer behavior section. In addition, we have added a big data section and how you can intelligently use data to perfect your lead generation and conversion rates.

Please enjoy the 2013 Online Performance Study by REAL ***Trends*** and do not hesitate to contact us for more information, participation, or dissemination of the study.

Travis Saxton
REAL ***Trends*** Marketing and Technology Manager

One intelligent system. Real estate success simplified.





FASTER. SMARTER. BETTER.

Online lead generation can be expensive and yield poor results if you're not a digital marketing expert. Even the most experienced online marketer cannot monitor and adjust campaigns with the frequency required to drive down costs and improve conversions. Couple our experience with some seriously intelligent technology and achieve better results, faster.

CULTIVATE. NURTURE. ENGAGE.

All leads do not deserve the same amount of attention. Wouldn't it be nice to provide the fertile grounds for them to grow, hire someone to thoughtfully watch their actions and nudge you when they're ready to engage? We thought so too. That's why we created an Opportunity Wall and other smart applications to monitor your leads until they're ready to become your clients.

Buyer Activity Tracking

Best-Fit Leads

Smart-Drip Email

LEARN MORE AT
BoomTownROI.com

FOREWORD

For over 27 years REAL *Trend*s has published research about a wide range of aspects of the residential brokerage business. From financial and operational performance studies and rankings of the top brokerage firms and sales professionals to five different studies of consumer views and habits in the home buying and selling process, REAL *Trends* has invested considerable time and resource to find answers to important questions.

The 2013 Online Performance Study will surely go down as one of the most timely and useful research projects we have ever produced. Why? Too much of the information that has been published is underwritten by those with a product to sell or a sponsor to support. This report is one of the first that is unbiased in every regard. It reports on the real results of brokerage firms in their attempts to create real value for themselves, their sales professionals and their housing consumers. The report blows up some myths about competing online and confirms some others.

There is no more important topic at this time as we move from the infancy of the internet to young adulthood. There is still so much to learn and so many new tools and products for brokerage firms to consider. What we have set out to do is to establish useful benchmarks so that the leaders of realty organizations can make rational and well informed decisions about where to invest their scarce resources.

Steve Murray
Publisher

You wouldn't buy a suit straight off the rack.

So why invest in a one-size-fits-all technology platform?

Contact us today to learn how we can create the perfect fit and keep you at the forefront of real estate technology.

As a network of independent brokerages, we understand the importance of gaining the power of a large corporation without sacrificing your independence and personal voice. Therefore, we provide custom technology solutions to fit your unique needs.

Usability is the foundation of our technology platform. We believe that sending increased traffic to a less than perfect site is counterintuitive. By focusing first on usability, we develop your site with the needs of your users in mind. Designs and functionality are based off scientific data collected through our in-house usability department as opposed to merely following existing trends.

the enterprise network

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Pre-Lead Considerations – Lead Sources, Efficacy and Trends in Lead Generation

Social Media in Lead Generation, Branding and Interaction

The 2013 Online Performance Study kicks off with one of the hottest buzz items in real estate: Social Media. Social media for the longest time has always been the elephant in the room. With questions like why?, how?, what's the benefit? and so much more, brokers and agents had a decision to make whether to follow the pack or disregard and focus on their core business. The long and short of social media is that it is here to stay and those agents that are or have embraced its impact are benefitting. Through our technology consulting practice we have seen first hand that there are numerous active agents that generate a bulk of their high producing business directly from social media channels. This is essentially replacing the rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, and other social/business networking opportunities as the impact is broader, more immediate and more efficient than traditional networking areas. While we are not advocating this to replace any offline networking, we do think strong consideration in participating in online groups, networks and conversations are wise. In a little while we will talk actual social media traffic numbers and referring traffic to your website. To get started we would like to point out what actually works in driving traffic and engagement through social media sites.

With the aid of CityBlast, a real estate social media company, we analyzed nearly 1 million social media posts of real estate sales professionals and brokerages in an attempt to deliver you the perfect social media presence and mix. Below you will find the top 10 posts based on the combination of clicks+shares+comments+likes along with the links to where they reside for your comparison.

Click links below:

Inspired by the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco: Beams Chair

Green building for every resident: Top 10 States for LEED in 2012

The eight-room, 420-square-foot studio apartment

Landlord From Hell Bans Pork, Long Showers, Overnight Guests

How to decorate your first condo

Green demolition: Watch this skyscraper disappear floor by floor [VIDEO]

The long and short of decorating narrow space

You can still buy a house without saving your pennies *(link removed)*

How the 226-square-foot condo is reshaping our public space *(link removed)*

Three Smart Home Makeovers That Boost Value and Income *(link removed)*

You should immediately notice several things. These stories are made up of mostly news/personal interest type topics and do not include listings. Sharing listings on social media channels typically gets very poor interaction and, depending on the frequency with which a real estate sales professional may be posting listings, can be the surest way to be unfriended. The fact of the matter is social media needs to remain social and the only time listings should be shared is if you have a social reason to do so. Sharing stories of families in a just sold type situation is one way to make the agent look good and offer up something of value to that person's social network.

Social Media Breakdown

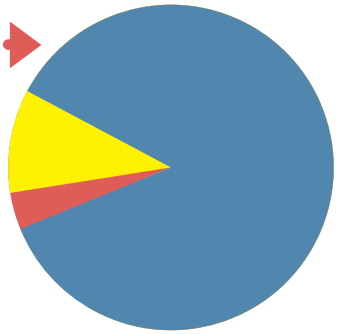
This data was analyzed from nearly 8 million real estate social media posts that were actually read. While the findings are not surprising, they do indicate the impact of the respective channels below:

Facebook contributed 87% of all real estate-related posts

Twitter contributed to 10% of all real estate-related posts

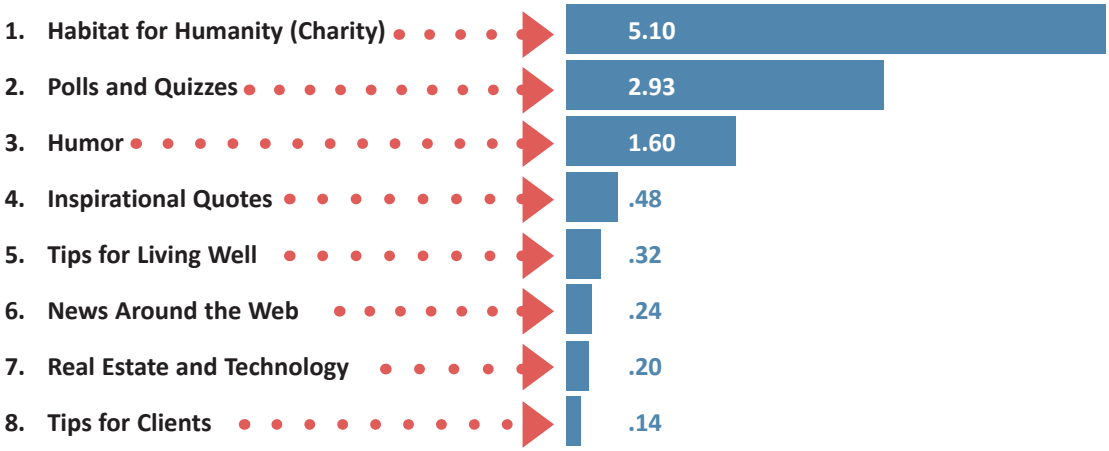
LinkedIn contributed to 3% of all real estate-related posts

Pinterest was not analyzed in this data sample but will be considered in the average referral traffic to real estate websites.



Impactful Social Media Categories for Real Estate Professionals

CityBlast offers 15 different types of content. Here are the categories which performed the best in general, and their interaction score (proprietary figure that normalizes for number of posts).



These top 8 categories can aid you in determining the exact mix of social media content for your network. Surprisingly, charity related items were the most read and interacted with followed by polls and quizzes on both fun topics and business related topics. Nowhere in this list again is any type of sales data or listing information. Examples of the types of posts in each category can be found at **https://www.cityblast.com/member/index** by clicking on the magnifying glasses.

Website Data on Social Media

Last year, Google introduced a new statistic (Visits via Social Referral). We only had one month to analyze the data, but now we have a full year. In 2013 only 2% of all real estate traffic was referred via a social media channel. As we dive deeper into this we see the following social media metrics:

Average Facebook followers: 765

Average Facebook visits monthly: 1,832 (September 2013)

Average Pinterest visits monthly: 16

Average LinkedIn visits monthly: 10

The latter number shows over 3% of all real estate traffic from social referral so we are seeing that number climb versus the average over the last 12 months.

Lead Sources and Validity of the Leads

Lead generation is on every broker and agent's mind we run across. The search for the holy grail of quantity, value, and the true source that doesn't have poor leads is what everyone wants. We are not sure if that perfect combination exists, however here is a look at nearly 50,000 of the most common lead sources and the breakdown of the percentages that include proper contact information along with the percent that was vetted and passed on to an agent. The control in this portion of the study is the data was collected and analyzed by an independent call center where training and standards were kept consistent across the board.

Lead Source	Phone%	Assigned%	Assigned% - Leads with Phone#
Broker Website	93.10%	33.98%	36.50%
Homefinder.com	21.05%	10.53%	50.00%
Homes.com	100.00%	37.88%	37.88%
Homeswing	96.19%	5.84%	6.07%
Inbound phone call	91.48%	64.40%	70.40%
Mobile Marketing System	100.00%	5.26%	5.26%
Ready Chat	81.76%	38.24%	46.76%
Real Info	96.43%	42.86%	44.44%
Realtor.com	53.40%	20.42%	38.24%
Tiger Leads	100.00%	16.67%	16.67%
Trulia	51.70%	14.72%	28.47%
Zillow	62.23%	19.93%	32.02%
AVERAGE	**82.48%**	**34.61%**	**41.96%**

In analyzing this data the first column indicates the number of leads from that lead source that contains a real phone number, followed by the percentage of the leads that were assigned to agents. Assigning to the agents means the leads were vetted, they were real, and they wanted to get more information. The last data column shows the percentage of assigned leads that had a phone number.

Amongst the listing portals and based on the propensity for the call reps to assign leads you can see the clear front runner in quality with this large sample size was Homes.com followed by Zillow.

Website Design and Usability: A Quantitative Approach

Guest Contributor: Ido Zucker, Partner/Co-Founder of Booj

At booj (formerly Active Website), we believe that the foundation to any product starts with a focus on usability. We have found that creating an efficient and effective customer experience results in higher conversion rates and customer loyalty.

There are many methods for testing usability. Mainly they fall into two categories, qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative analysis is often based on opinion and experience, while quantitative studies are based on data and measurable tasks.

We opened our in-house usability lab in early 2007 to offer a balanced approach to usability testing. Our first major investment was a Tobii system.

Tobii (www.tobii.com) is the world leader in eye tracking and gaze interaction. This advanced technology makes it possible for computers to know exactly where users are looking while they interact with any type of media on that machine. It does not require the user to wear any additional gear and is the least intrusive method in gaining so much valuable organic data.

Once the data is collected, the results can be segmented into categories based on gender, age, experience and many more. This allows us, as website creators, to make better decisions based on our target audience's habits and profiles. For example, we can tell how women in their 20s with a high level of comfort using the web will react to a specific web page versus men in their 50s with a low comfort level.

It is often too easy to cut corners and release a product based on your assumptions and experience. Some developers may even do basic qualitative research by asking what their customers expect from the product in question. This approach is flawed on many levels:

1. **It can jeopardize the impact of making a great first impression with your product release.**
2. **It can lead to greater expense and development time by resulting in post-production changes.**
3. **It does not provide significant feedback to discover and explore improvements that would have a substantial impact on usability and engagement.**

I would consider our team to be very experienced and some of the smartest people I know, and I can't tell you how many times these individuals were thoroughly shocked by data proving that a better solution was overlooked. You simply cannot break new ground by following what has already been done by others.

To break new ground, you need to be armed with data to make the right decisions.

Analysis in Action

Booj powers the technology platform for The Enterprise Network, an exclusive network of independent brokerages that collaborate to stay ahead of the curve and lead their respective markets. Each year we host a conference covering the most relevant topics in the real estate and technology industries. The conference is only open to network members and is the highlight of our year.

As part of this year's conference, "The Journey into Mobile", Tom Flanagan, Vice President of Marketing and Technology at Residential Properties LTD, presented a session about the importance of images in today's visual web. He compared the pros and cons of professional photography versus agents taking

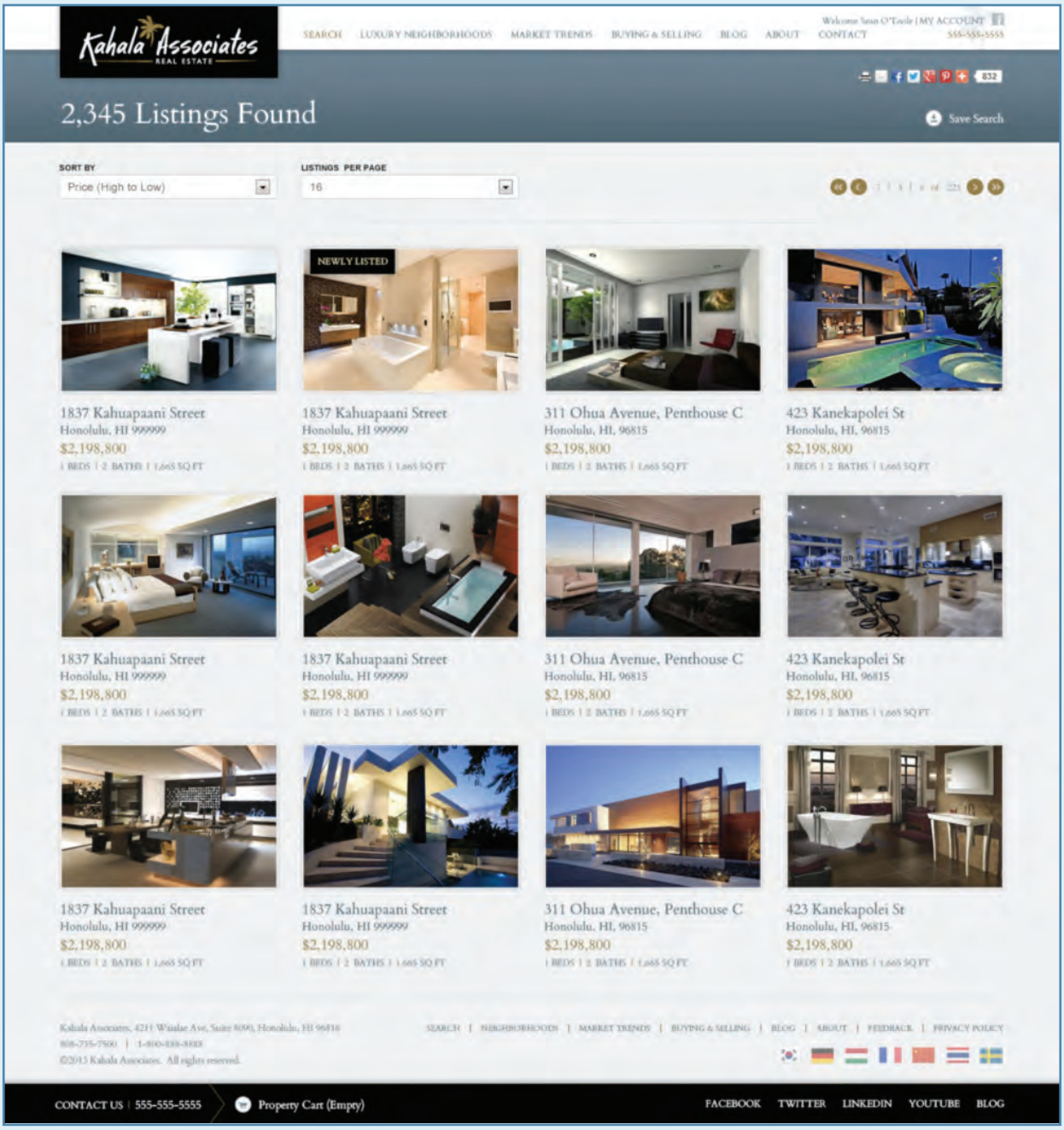
their own, ordering of photography and human sequential learning, amongst many other perspectives. It was a great session with many valuable takeaways.

To help with his session, Tom reached out to our team to produce a quantitative study that sought to identify the ideal main image for a property. The end goal was to reach the optimal conversion in users clicking through to see more information about a property.

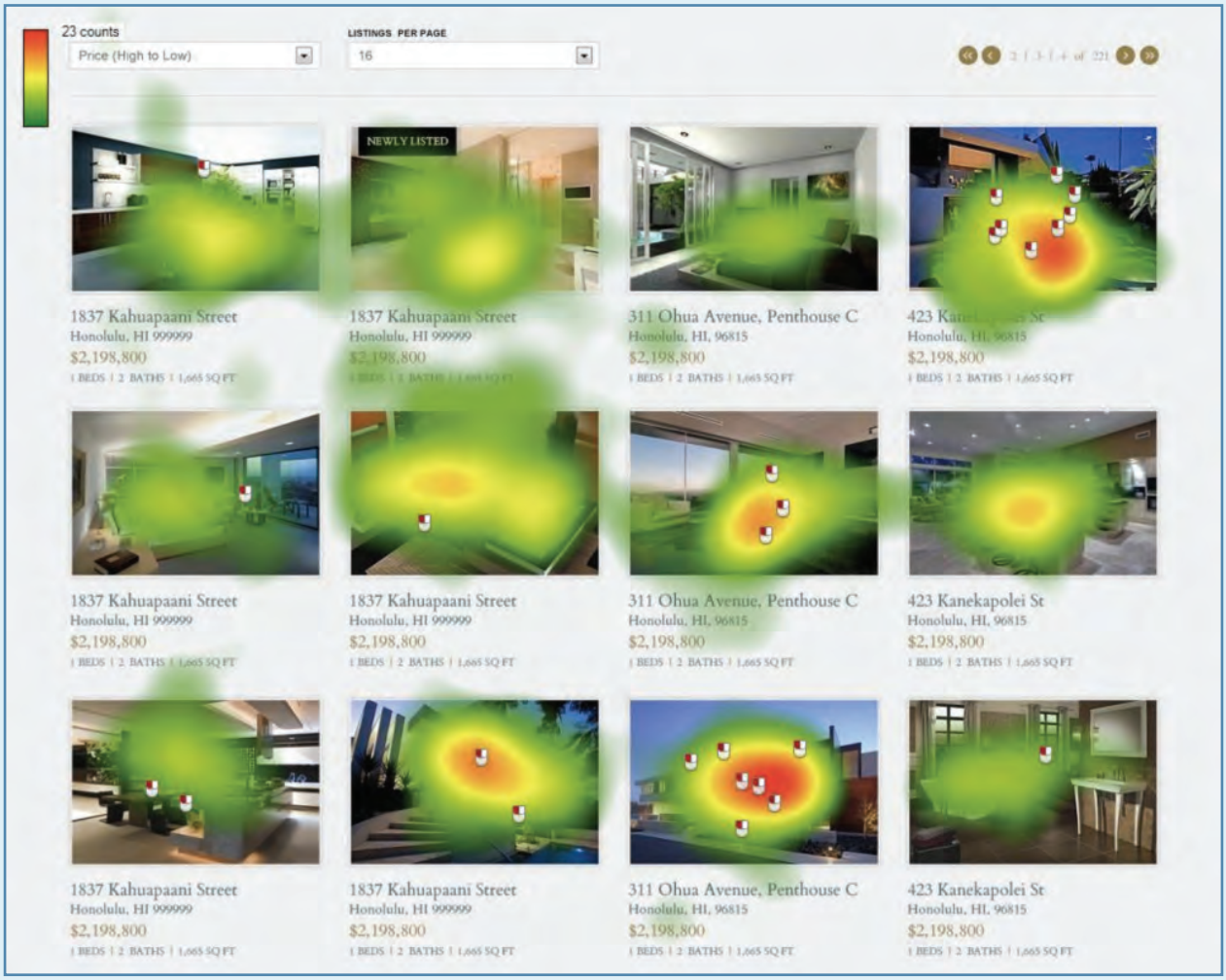
As a first step, we compiled a search results view filled with images of high-end contemporary homes. We created an even balance of the most popular types of shots (exterior front, kitchen, bathroom, master bedroom and garden). We then created another results page matching the first in structure, but highlighting rustic properties as opposed to contemporary ones.

Test group users worked through an exercise where they would see each of the search results pages and would be asked to click through to the property that was most appealing to them.

Here is an example of the contemporary results page:



Here is how the resulting data as visualized with Tobii looked like for this screen:



The images focused on most times and for the longest durations show up as red on the heat map. You can also see the locations that users clicked to go through to the property in question.

It was a very short test, yet it yielded abundant data.

Our final results showed that the most successful images were:

- **Exterior images**
- **With the home fitting into the entire shot (leaving space for sky and foliage)**
- **Shot in twilight with the home well lit**
- **With high contrast and great color**

Integrated Approach

This is a basic example of a quantitative usability study, but it easily illustrates the importance of gathering such data. The millions of decisions that go into developing a quality product can be greatly enhanced, reinforced, and sometimes reconstructed by allowing new perspectives and considerations into the mix.

It is very hard to right a course that has been travelled down to the point of no return. I hope that more developers will embrace the importance of usability in helping us in creating a "user friendly" world.

Google's Role in the Real Estate Process

Over the past decade, our world, and particularly the world of house hunters has become increasingly digital. Consumers are going online at a rapid pace to look for information to support their buying decisions. They watch "how-to" videos on YouTube, they read review sites, they look up specific brands on search engines, and even research on the go with their smartphones and tablets.

Google calls this idea ZMOT, or the Zero Moment of Truth*; the idea that shopping is no longer about showing up in a store, or in our cases at a broker's office or an open house, seeking advice or counsel on what to buy or how much they should pay. As Google's ZMOT handbook for marketers explains, "the sales funnel isn't really a funnel anymore." Today there is a new, empowered consumer generation that does its homework ahead of time at this new and critically important Zero Moment of Truth.

> Shopping is no longer about showing up in a store

Per the handbook, penned by Jim Lecinski, Google's ZMOT expert, we know that "at the Zero Moment of Truth, today's shoppers bounce back and forth at their own speed in a multichannel marketplace. They switch devices to suit their needs at any given moment. They search; go off to look at reviews, ratings, styles and prices; and then search again. They see ads on TV and in newspapers and online. They walk into local stores to look at products. They talk to friends, over the back fence and on social media. Then it's back to ZMOT for more information."

The story is no different for home shoppers. Real estate professionals know that their customers are uber-connected and informed. Nine in 10 homebuyers today rely on the internet as one of their primary research sources, and 52% turn to the web as their first step. In fact, real estate related searches on Google.com grew 22% year-over-year. Additionally, approximately one-fifth of real estate related searches happen on mobile devices, and Google real estate related searches on mobile devices grew 120% year-over-year from 2011 to 2012.

Search Engines Play a Critical Role in the Real Estate ZMOT

- Home shoppers using search engines are actively engaged, raising their hands asking for more information or assistance.

Source: Google & Complete Home Shopper Study, 2011; Google & Compete New Home Shopper Study, 2012

In today's complex, rapidly changing, and digitally driven media environment, capturing a home shopper's attention in order to build a real estate business and personal REALTOR® brand is tougher than ever.

With these types of strategies in place, REALTORS® and brokers can position themselves to drive their businesses forward and win at the critical Zero Moment of Truth.

**The Zero Moment of Truth e-book from Google can be downloaded free: www.zeromomentoftruth.com*

Case Study: Google's Chief Economist, Hal Varian, explains how search queries can provide insights into people's interests, intentions, and future actions.

Reprinted with Permission from Google 2013

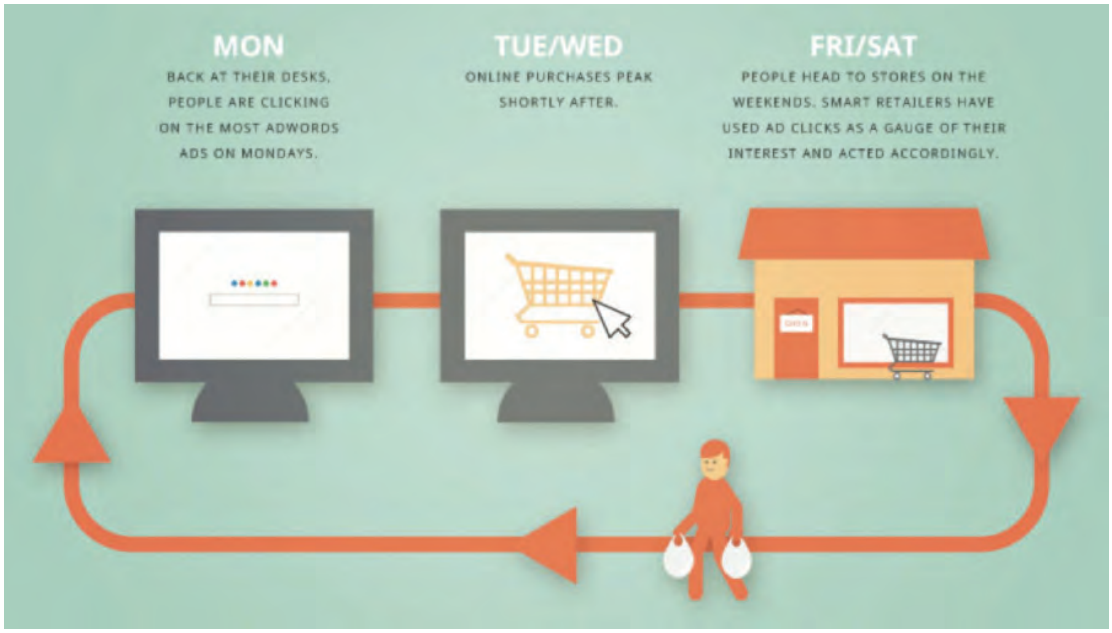
Needless to say, such insights can be very useful to businesses. Free tools like Google Correlate and Google Insights for Search enable you to use that database of intentions to 'predict the present' and better understand your customers' behavior in real time.

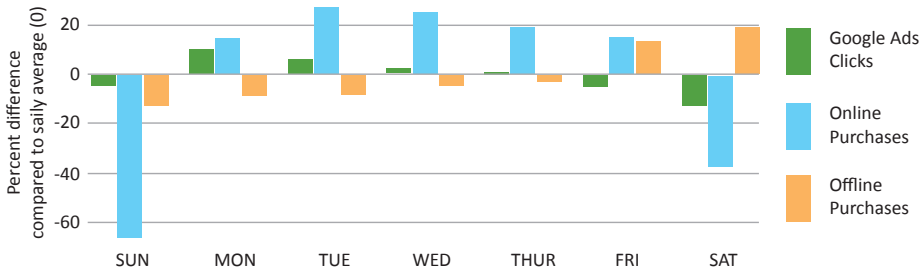
Searchblog's John Battelle has called Google 'the database of intentions,' because search queries provide insights into people's interests, intentions, and future actions. Needless to say, such insights can be very useful to businesses. Free tools like Google Correlate and Google Insights for Search enable you to use that database of intentions to 'predict the present' and better understand your customers' behavior in real time.

"Free tools like Google Correlate and Google Insights for Search enable you to better understand your customers' behavior in real time."

For example, if you type 'weight loss' into Google Correlate you find 'healthy smoothie' and 'meal replacement.' Not too surprising. But you also see terms like 'vacation destination,' 'cruises to,' and 'wedding checklist.' And if you look at the searches that occur three weeks after the 'weight loss' query, you see 'weight loss plateau' and 'not losing weight' at the top of the list.

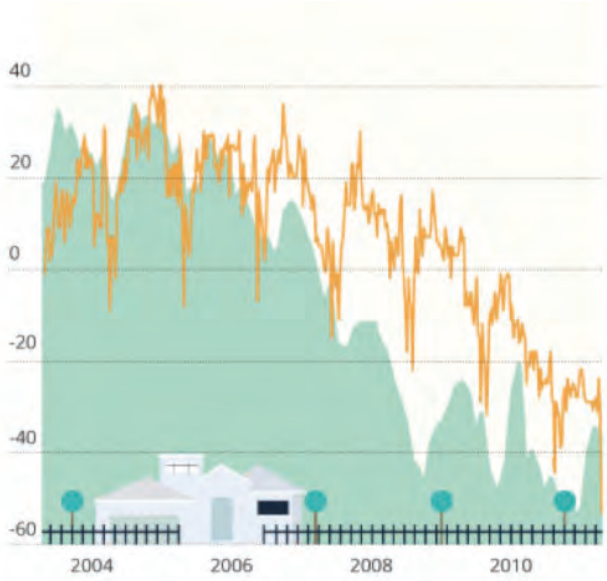
Using the publicly available tools mentioned above, we've uncovered a number of interesting relationships. Here are some examples.



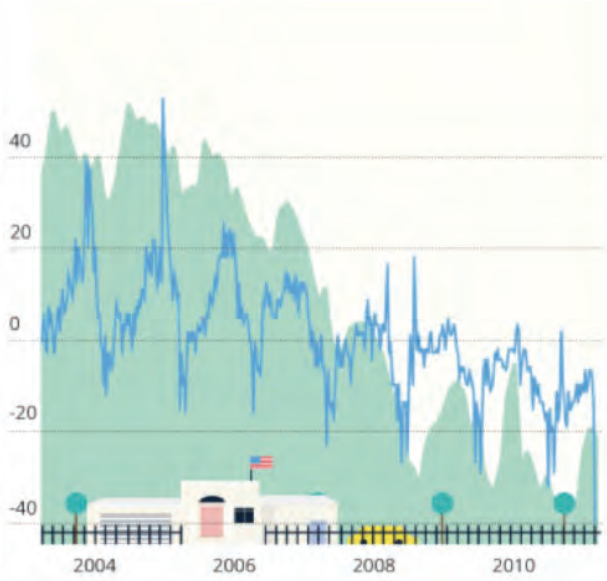


RETAIL

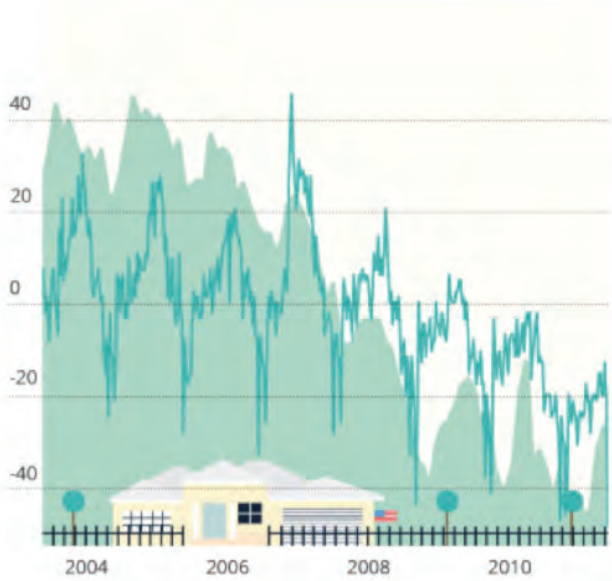
When do ads take effect? By comparing Google AdWords data and MasterCard SpendingPulse data, we can see that people click on ads the most on Mondays. Online spending follows quickly – but not immediately – with online commerce peaking a day or two later. Offline spending patterns have a greater lag, trailing by one week.



NEW HOMES SOLD vs
SEARCHES FOR 'HOME INSPECTIONS AND APPRAISALS'



NEW HOMES SOLD vs
SEARCHES FOR 'HOME INSURANCE'



NEW HOMES SOLD vs
SEARCHES FOR 'PROPERTY MANAGEMENT'

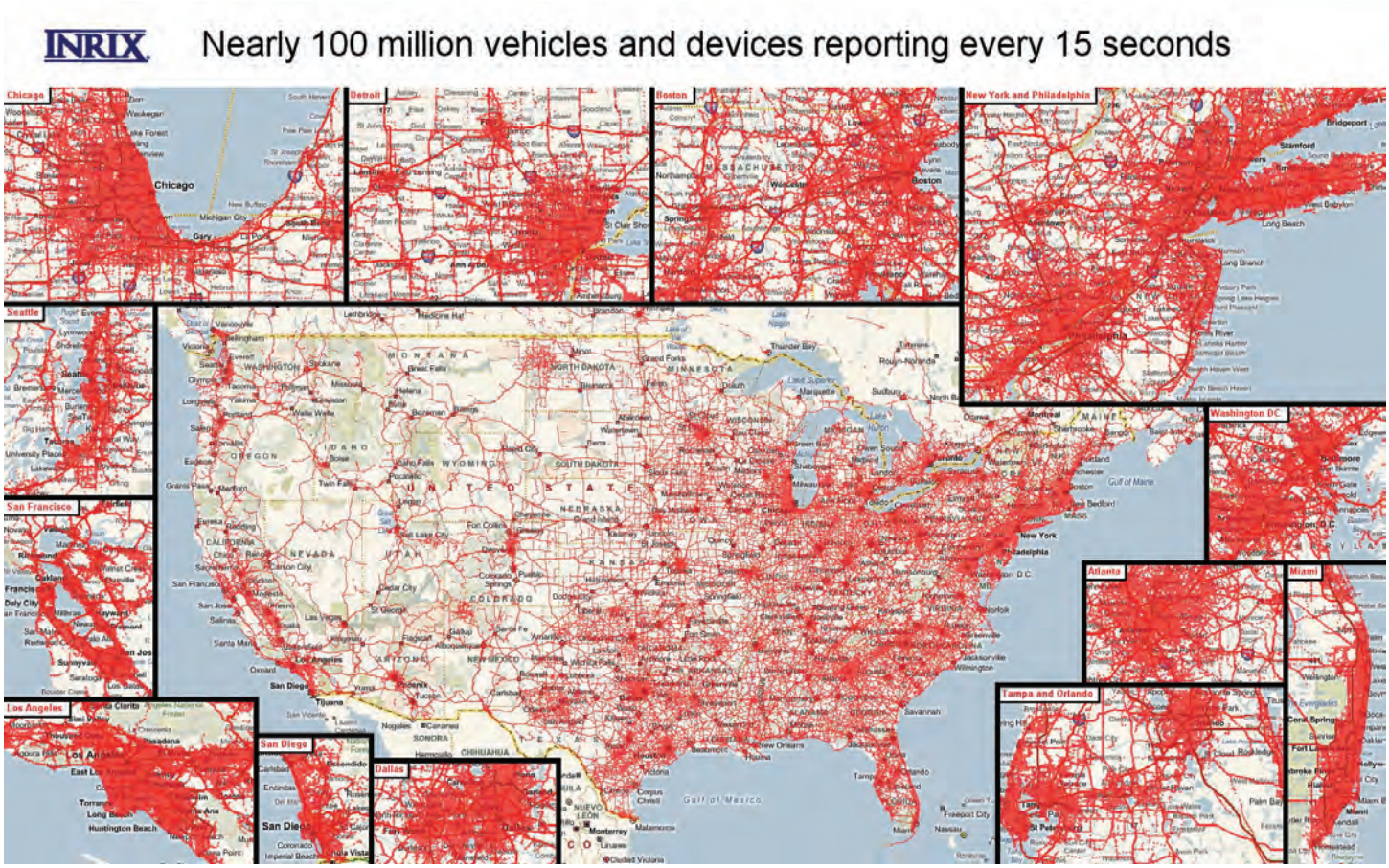
NEW HOMES SOLD vs
SEARCHES FOR 'REAL ESTATE AGENCIES'

REAL ESTATE

Reading the real estate market with Google Trends: As foreclosures started to rise and median house prices dropped, search queries in the real estate category were correlated to the number of new homes sold in the U.S.

Growing Trends in Lead Generation and Consumer Real Estate Search Habits

In the past year we have seen many new advancements in data sharing and search technologies for brokers and agents. Many are incremental strategies designed to make one aspect of the search experience better, not necessarily all of them at once. A new Seattle based company is changing the way real estate consumers search for properties. We have all been told location, location, location is the key to a real estate transaction whether it's determining price, finding potential buyers, etc. INRIX has taken a big data approach to the real estate industry and has generated some of the hottest buzz of the year. A data based company that collects millions of traffic related data points from the likes of FedEx, UPS, taxis, police, and anonymous consumer data from GPS enabled devices is bringing higher intelligence to the real estate search.



At the time of this publication, INRIX has approximately 13 real estate brokerages in the United States leveraging their data. How it works is changing our industry. With this data via an API (Application Program Interface) to tie your website MLS/IDX search into traffic data, the consumer can now make one of the most significant deciding factors in a home search a criteria when filtering homes. You can now search for homes based on drive times to and from your office or any address you want to input. Truly a game changer, INRIX drive time can make your brokerage ahead of the game by offering a truly tailored home search experience.

An important statistic regarding this technology:

- 73% of home buyers say drive time is a key decision making criterion when finding their home.
- Having access to this type of data considerably shortens the transaction cycle as your results are more tailored to the consumer's desires and less time is wasted in the home hunt.

Case Study—Drive Time as Key Home Search Criteria:

A typical search in a large metropolitan market for a young family based on their individual criteria yielded 367 properties that match the suburbs and areas they were trying to find a home in that was convenient to both of their offices.

With INRIX Drive Time integrated into their brokerage site, this young family could do the same search and identify the travel times on both ends of the drive to their offices. The results returned 12 perfectly matched properties decreasing the amount of time when vetting 367 properties for these consumers.

This decreased the original property search results by nearly 97% saving both the real estate professional and consumer a significant amount of time.

Smart Search is a Better Search

Now that we have shown you a relatively new trend in home search, one of the most popular real estate search trends on brokerage sites in 2012 was the implementation of "Smart Search", a simple Google like interface that can predict and yield results on what the consumer wants as they are typing their desires in a text box.

After all, we have become conditioned to this type of search, so why not bring it to real estate. Several companies are implementing this strategy and it is really reducing the amount of time it takes to conduct a search and delivers a better consumer experience. While there will always be a need for an advanced search most consumers just want the basics and fast. In this on demand society being able to enter just about any search criteria in your initial search and get instant feedback reduces user error, erroneous clicks and enhances their experience. For a few examples of this search in action visit:

www.comey.com

www.dicksonrealty.com

Introduction to Remarketing

We have all seen it. You are browsing a website or checking your gmail and an ad gets displayed and you feel like you are being watched. You're a golfer, how do they know to display the latest gadget you were just looking at or other similar gadgets. Enter Remarketing. This is a highly effective and highly targeted form of online advertising. Why it is effective is simple. With so many real estate sources and websites out there when you get a visitor to your website you want to keep them using your site even after they leave. Remarketing does that essentially. By tying in your website with Google AdWords, remarketing allows you to be particularly smart with your online advertising.

What is Google Remarketing?

Google Remarketing is a cost effective way to broaden your reach, bring potential customers back to your site, lower your cost per click and **increase conversions 300-400%!**

The way this works is you can access the Google Analytics data you have for these customers from their previous visits, like goal completions and pages viewed, to show them targeted ads on the Google Display Network (via Google AdWords) for the products or services you know they have already shown an interest in.

Here are some of the **highly targeted real estate AdWords campaigns you can create:**

•Bring back real estate searchers who were browsing but did not contact you.

•Target similar properties. They may have checked out a $500,000 home but missed a few similar properties. Advanced remarketing can accomplish this.

•Recruiting — Bordering on annoying following outside agents around the web after they have visited your site can show you're dedicated to landing them.

•Retain customers who have bought a home in the past.

•Win new customers in your target market – narrow your list to include Northern California visitors who have watched one of your latest videos.

Why Remarketing?

- **300-400% Conversion Rate Boost** (compared to standard ads based on Google 2012 data)
- Lower Cost Per Action and Higher Click Through Rate
- **Expand your reach and influence users to return** to your website (re-engage lost customers)
- **Connect with exactly the right customers** using rich online insights
- Deliver targeted Google Display Network ads based on your **specific customer segments**
- Reach **more than two million websites** on the GDN
- Google Analytics tracking code now has **built-in compatibility for remarketing**. This means that websites using Google Analytics will now only require one tracking code, rather than two.

How does Remarketing Work?

Remarketing helps you turn unconverted visitors into new business opportunities. After a visitor visits your site and leaves, they have been added to your bucket of potential users that can be added to a targeted list. When they are visiting other sites, you can show them display ads based on the targeting that you set, which increases the likelihood that they will return to your site and perform a goal conversion.

To employ remarketing, you either select from predefined remarketing lists in AdWords or create your own customized lists in Google Analytics. Then you choose from your custom remarketing lists within AdWords and create your targeted campaigns.

market leader®

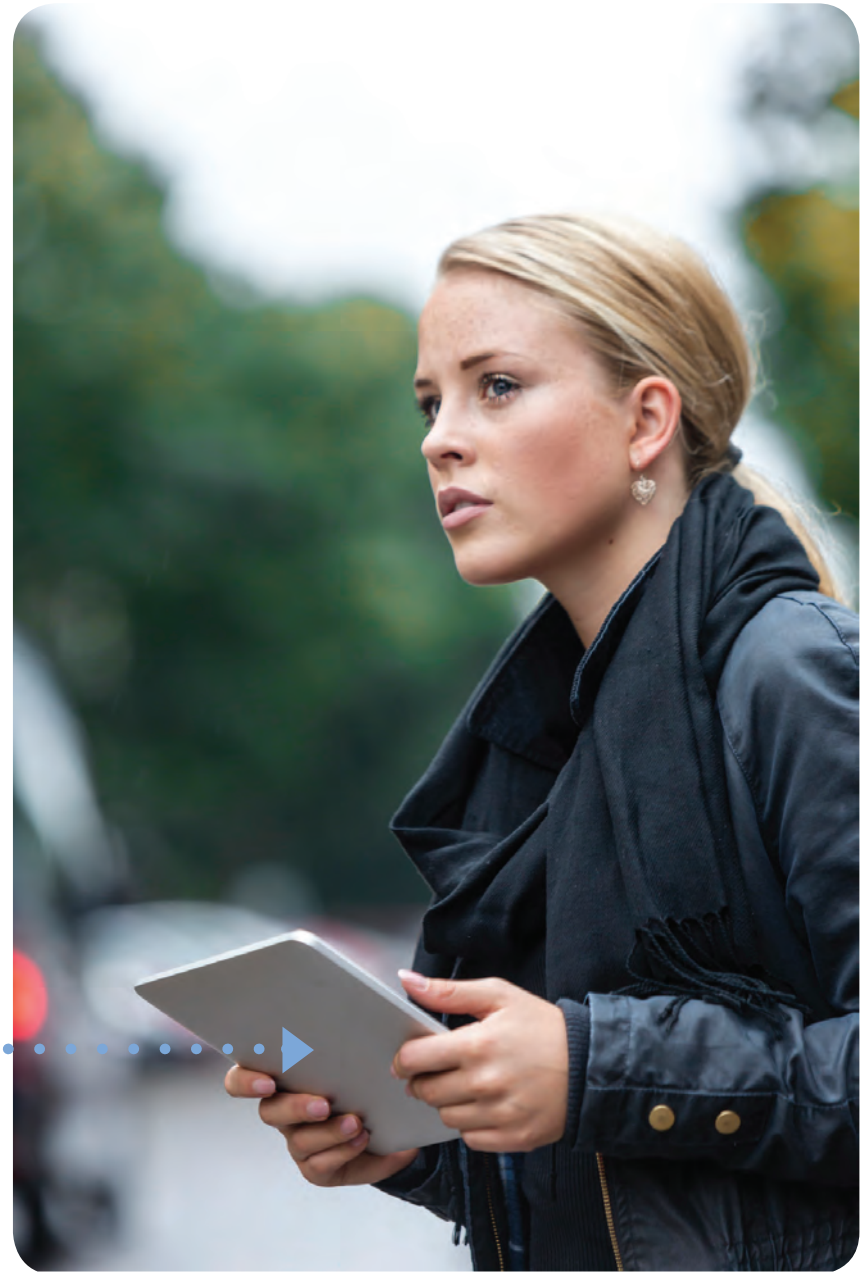
Market Leader is the only company that provides Smart Lead Technology—empowering you to generate, engage, and manage all leads—in one seamless solution. Get the real estate advantage that helps you and your agents turn more leads into clients and more clients into closings.

Smart Lead Technology:

- ✓ Delivers all leads into your Market Leader system, enabling faster, relevant responses
- ✓ Includes mobile access for immediate follow up—94% of home buyers rate responsiveness as very important
- ✓ Powers your business with market data and targeted direct marketing materials
- ✓ Positions you as the trusted real estate advisor, transforming leads into clients

877-732-0698 marketleader.com/smart

The Active Real Estate Consumer – Consumer Real Estate Trends and Online Behavior



Presented by: market leader

CONSUMER REAL ESTATE TRENDS *and Online Behavior*

Empower your teams with consumer data

With so much data available online, today's real estate consumers expect to find housing information faster and easier than ever before. It's crucial that your agents recognize the latest trends in consumer behavior, and are armed with the right tools and resources to increase transaction volumes and dominate their market.

Most real estate transactions begin online

83% OF BUYERS & **72% OF SELLERS** **report using the Internet immediately** upon deciding they're interested in buying or selling.

Diversify your lead sources

Agent websites and the local MLS **are the most popular sites for consumers,** followed closely by Trulia and other major websites.

TIP ***Be where consumers are searching.*** *Ensure every agent has a website that provides relevant market data and MLS listings to encourage leads to come back. Agent websites should capture leads and funnel them into one CRM system.*

Speed wins

TIP ***Having mobile access when away from the office is critical*** *to staying on top of your business. Agents should be able to instantly respond to leads, connect with their entire sphere, and add contacts to their marketing campaigns.*

Let your leads lead the way

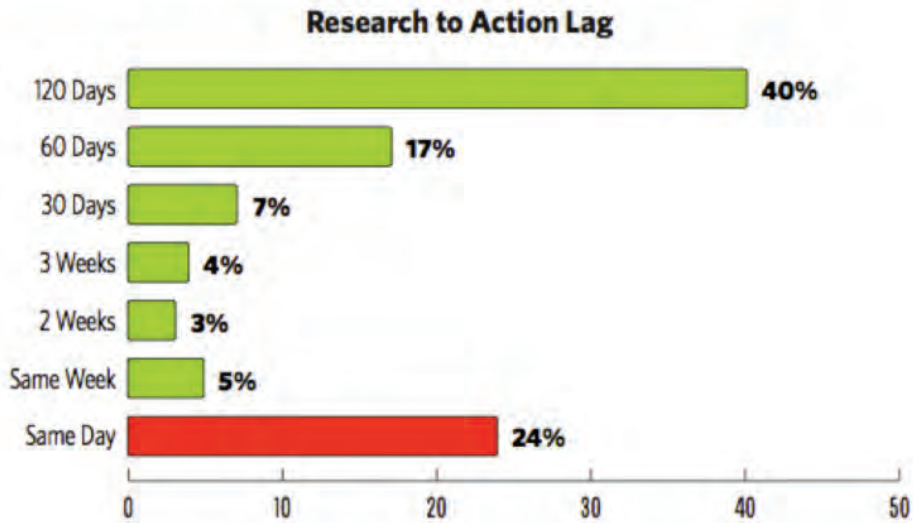
Access to home listings is **the #1 motivation** for registering on real estate websites.

Agents who send their leads **individualized campaigns** with relevant market data increase their sales by more than 50%.

TIP ***Keep contacts engaged until they are ready to move.*** *It's critical to place online leads on a marketing campaign or set reminders to consistently reach out with relevant information. Also, don't just send emails. Print materials such as sports schedules, magnets, and postcards can effectively set agents apart.*

The Online Home Research Process is Also Varied

- New home shoppers are undecided and shop around online, though nearly one fourth complete an action on a real estate site the day they start researching



78% of new home shoppers visit 3 + sites prior to taking action on a real estate site

Source: Google & Compete New Home Shopper Survey, 2012

Mobile's Role in Real Estate

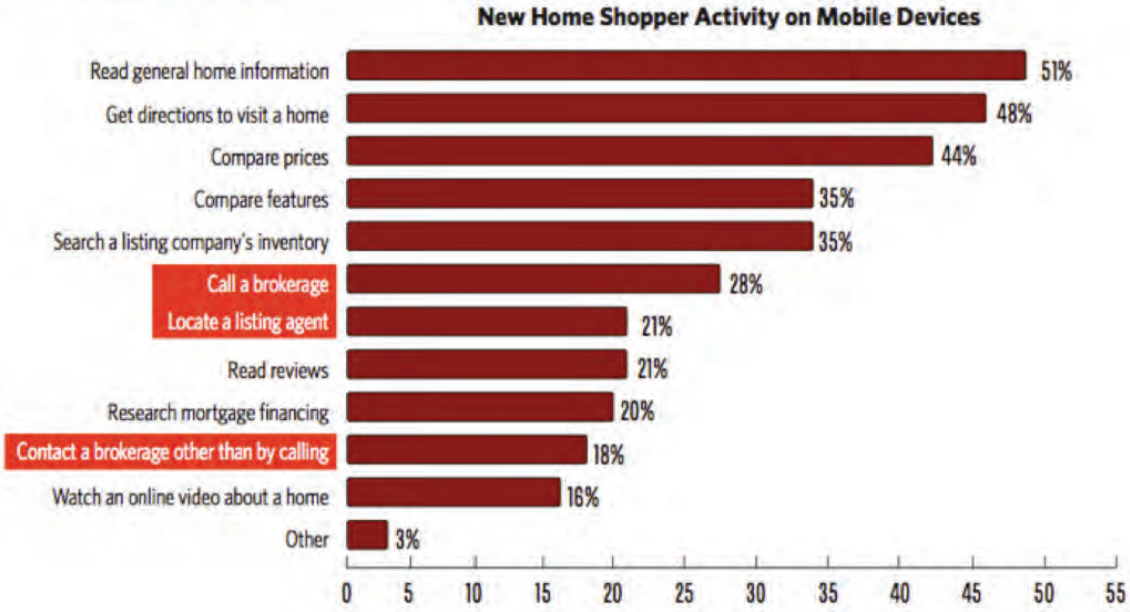
Mobile Operating Systems Real Estate Traffic Share:

Mobile OS Traffic Share	
iOS	84.5%
Android	11.0%
BlackBerry	2.3%
Windows Phone	1.8%
Other	0.4%

It is no secret mobile real estate search has exploded, whether from a mobile app or mobile website, on a phone or tablet, the numbers are skyrocketing. When we first published online data for real estate firms back in 2011 only 11.3% of all traffic came from a mobile device and we thought that was a lot. In 2012 that number nearly doubled to 21.34%. In 2013 mobile real estate traffic has exceeded 30% at 30.45%. Amongst this traffic 12.4% comes from an iPad and 9.02% from an iPhone. The Android operating system accounts for 8.97% making up just about the rest of the traffic. Note: With Android, traffic is not separated between tablets and phones.

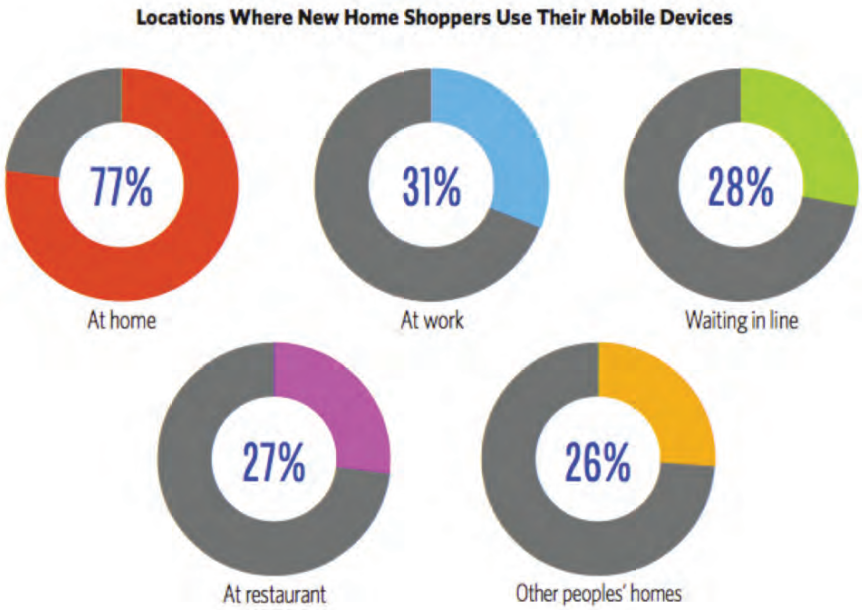
So what are they viewing, how and when?

Mobile New Home Shoppers Offer an Additional Source of Qualified Leads for REALTORS®



Below you will find empirical evidence that people are on the go. They are conducting real estate searches from just about anywhere at anytime. Mobile has transformed the way people search and find real estate.

New Home Research Happens on the Go



Source: Google & Compete New Home Shopper Mobile Survey, 2012

How are real estate consumers finding homes on a mobile device? We explored a popular mobile website company to help us find the answer.

Property search types on mobile phones (site comparison)
Here is a comparison of property search types on mobile phones across three highly traveled real estate sites.

Search Type	Site A	Site B	Site C	Aggregate
Location	27.5%	25.9%	35.6%	26.8%
Advanced/Other	72.5%	74.1%	64.4%	73.2%

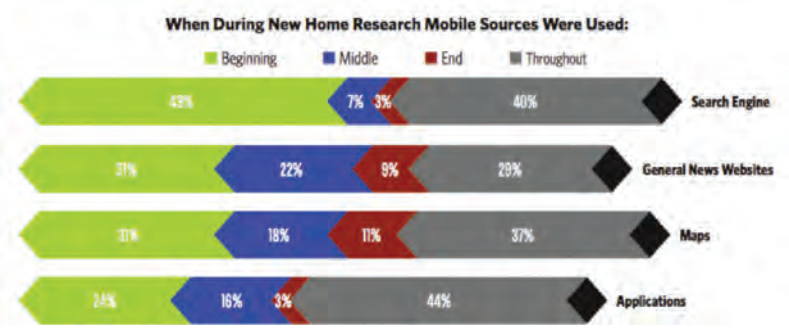
This table states that a location based search based on the GPS signal of your device accounts for 26.8% of the property searches. These are typically people on the go or in a specific neighborhood actively searching at that moment. The advanced option is based on user input to narrow down their search, very similar to the current desktop process on most real estate websites.

When there is an option to search by type (such as address/street, open house, school district, etc.), the most popular choices are in order:
1. Street/address 2. Suburb 3. School District 4. Zip codes

Mobile Moment of Truth

There is a Critical Mobile ZMOT

- 89% of new home shoppers use a mobile search engine at the onset and throughout their research
- Mobile applications are used by 68% of new home shoppers at the onset and throughout their research
- REALTORS® can employ various mobile marketing techniques to make sure they are discoverable at the mobile ZMOT



Source: Google & Compete Home Shopper Mobile Survey, 2012

Mobile Impact on the Bottom Line and Real Estate Agent Performance

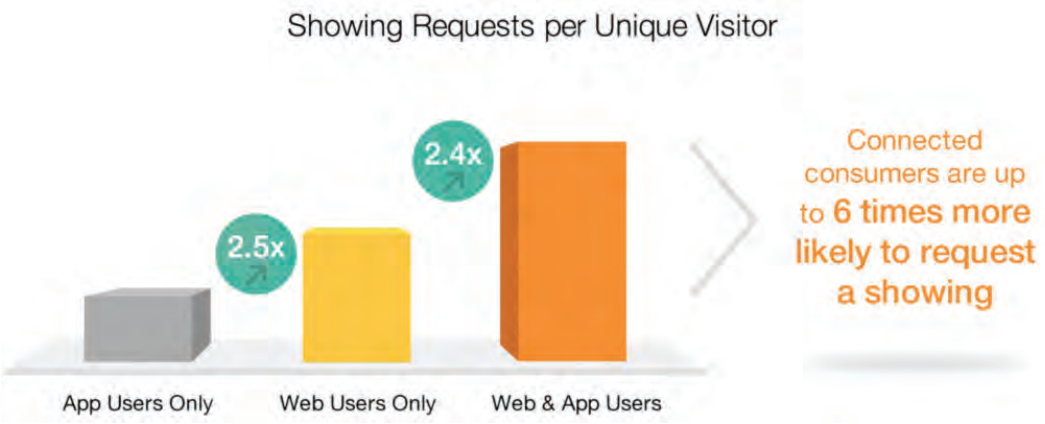
A Sophisticated Platform is Essential for the Successful Real Estate Brokerage

Today's most valuable real estate consumers conduct their search and connect with agents on their own terms, on their own timelines and through devices of their choosing. Agents in turn require the ability to effectively conduct business in the office, at home and in the field.

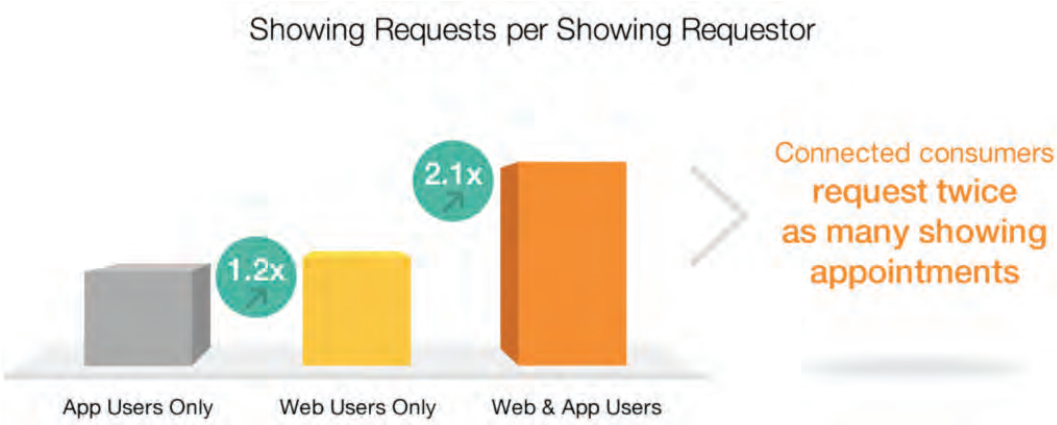
A comprehensive brokerage platform that couples a front-end, consumer-facing service (offering mobile and desktop access) that is completely in-sync with back-end agent tools meets the needs of consumers and agents alike. The resulting connection and transparency meets consumers where they lie and enables agents to deliver personalized, relevant service.

Mobile Integration Leads to More Property Showings

The most engaged home buyers – and the ones with the highest propensity to transact – drive their search through a combination of mobile and desktop tools.



These "connected consumers" are the most dedicated to their home search, and visit nearly twice as many homes with the same agent as those searching on a desktop platform alone.



Agents Engaged with a Multi-Channel CRM are More Likely to Close Deals

A CRM that is powered by client activity allows agents in the field to provide proactive, personalized service to their clients. A real estate-specific CRM that spans the desktop and mobile (including text notifications) fosters agent engagement and productivity.

A review of data from across ZipRealty's mobile-optimized CRM platform (Zap) shows the most engaged agents are also those who close the most transactions. Engaged agents are defined as those who have been on the platform for more than six months, have more than 700 clients in their database and log-in to the company's CRM solution more than five times per day.

Connected Consumers are More Likely to Transact

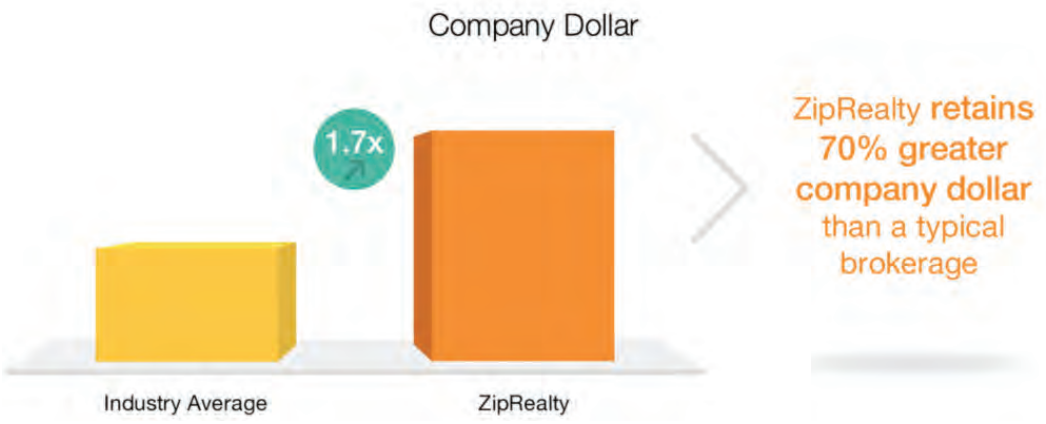
"Connected consumers" are four times more likely to buy a home than those who use only a website. Multi-modal connection to a brokerage and agent is a very strong indicator of consumer intent and highlights the importance of meeting consumers on their own terms.

Further, a study of ZipRealty data shows that "connected consumers" close one month faster than consumers who work with an agent through the website and telephone only.

The Bottom Line

Brokers with engaged agents who meet consumers on their own terms have more interactions with consumers who have a higher propensity to transact. As a result, these brokers generate more company dollar for the brokerage bottom line.

ZipRealty is a prime example of the impact a connected platform can have for a broker. With serious real estate consumers served through an interconnected ecosystem of an award-winning website and suite of mobile apps, a powerful, end-to-end CRM platform, and knowledgeable, "plugged-in" real estate agents, ZipRealty retains significantly more company dollar than the industry average. In sum, when technology works together, it works for the consumer, the agent and the broker's bottom line.



Brokerage Mobile Presence

85% of brokerages in the study have a mobile optimized website, up from 79% last year. 40% had a mobile app available for download, of which all also had a mobile website for a complete overlap covering all consumer preferences, up 8% over last year. So is a mobile website important? Those firms without saw decreases of 2.2% in iPhone traffic, 3.4% in iPad traffic and 2.1% in Android traffic for a total of 7.7% decrease in mobile traffic. This has increased over last year and is certainly a great indicator that brokerages need to have a strong mobile presence.

Final Mobile Observations

- A well-designed mobile presence can compete with Realtor.com, Zillow, Trulia, Redfin and other aggregator sites. Brokers should not assume that they cannot compete with them in the mobile domain. Consumers may use the aggregator sites, but they will also use the broker's site if it is mobile-friendly.
- The sites that get the best traffic and generate the most activity (inquiries and leads) are those where the broker has integrated mobile as part of their overall marketing strategy, including both online and print, to raise awareness that they have a user friendly mobile property search application. The sites are also designed to tie into the brand and utilized in special corporate marketing programs and promotions. In essence it's not rigid and never touched by the brokerage, a fundamental flaw seen in most real estate mobile sites.
- A focus on iOS and Android is the key to success. You should not compromise functionality in your site to accommodate Windows Phone, BlackBerry, or other devices. Until these operating systems gain more traction in the market, target where the majority of your clients are – the statistics are clear on this. If anything, Windows Phone has the best shot at becoming the #3 player, so it would be the one to watch closest.
- We're finding that brokers can expect to get at least one inquiry per agent over the course of a month. For example, a brokerage of 300 agents can expect 300 inquiries via mobile over the course of the month. We believe this number can be driven higher with improved functionality and custom development in a mobile website.

Final Mobile Best Practices

- The agent team must be trained on effective operation of the company's mobile site to get the most out of it. We have found that educated agents are the most effective marketing medium for the mobile website since they will promote it to prospects, existing clients, and farming areas.
- Quick and easy access to broker contact information on the home page via dedicated buttons is very important. We find many consumers come to the home page and go right to a contact button to get in touch with the broker.
- Quick and easy access to search functionality is also very important. The majority of customer activity is search related, so make it easy to access and use. Also, don't focus solely on location searches, as we've found advanced searches to be more important than location searches by a nearly 3-to-1 margin (3 advanced searches for every 1 location search).
- Have clear call-to-action buttons on the property details pages to allow customers to inquire about specific property details. Call-to-action buttons should lead directly to the listing agent for company listings and to the general company contact points for reciprocity listings. Preferably, the general company contact points should be manned 24/7, over extended hours, or at least have an automated response sent back to the user immediately, in order to provide prompt response to inquiries, which is what mobile users expect.
- Make judicious use of gestures, but do not over complicate the user interface. Don't assume that your end users are tech savvy enough to decipher complicated gestures to accomplish activities.
- Utilize and capture data not only from your mobile interface but also your desktop as trends will appear leading you to identify the leads that are more likely to convert sooner.
- Mobile Productivity Tool: Your agents should be equipped with a tool for conducting business on the go. The increased productivity will certainly increase the brokerage ROI.

Trends in Real Estate Video

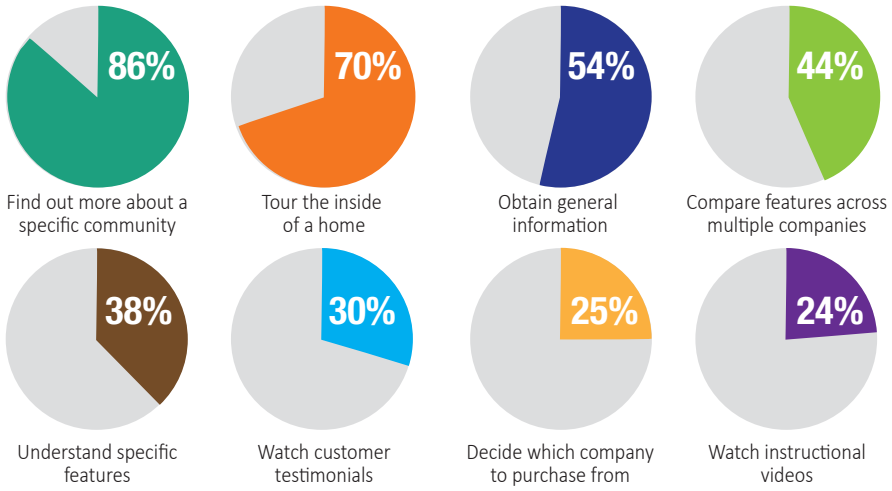
Video is another hot button in real estate. With real estate visitors consuming more video now than at any point in history and it playing a key role in search engine optimization, there is no mystery why it's on every broker and agent's mind. One of the newer entries in the video category is video by email or video newsletters. Companies such as BombBomb and VScreen (Marketvideos.com) both offer a product that allows the real estate professional to send video newsletters to their consumers. Below are some examples from YouTube of what topic real estate consumers are viewing.

Video Satisfies Multiple Research Needs for House Hunters Representing Another Crucial ZMOT

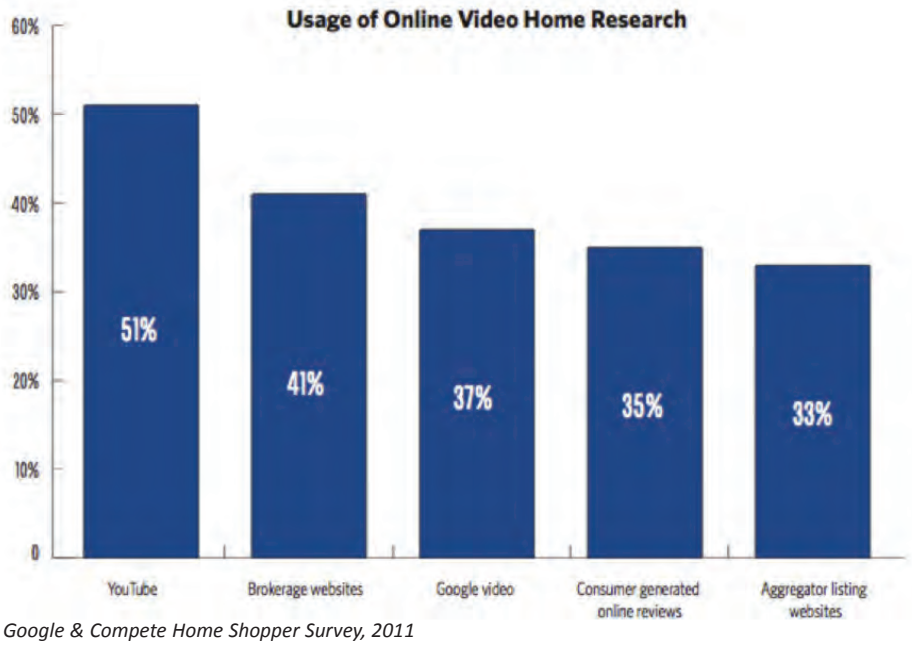
Opportunity for REALTORS® to market to home shoppers in online video environments

Source: Google & Compete Home Shopper Survey, 2011

Video Usage Purpose for Home Shoppers



YouTube is the Top Video Research Destination for Home Shoppers



Source: Google & Compete Home Shopper Survey, 2011

Video as a Key Component in Search Engine Optimization

Now that YouTube is owned by Google it's a great time to consider video as a key component in your SEO strategies and local presence. Consider video on how to's, local neighborhood guides, local promotions and partnerships and much more. But remember to always name your videos in a search engine friendly format. An example of a good naming convention that can help you with SEO is "Denver, CO Local Real Estate Guide for the Highlands Neighborhood". By including broad and local keywords incorporated with industry specific terms you hit the trifecta for search engine optimization.

Investing on YouTube

Video has become a driving force in internet searches. Making up over 50% of internet activity, websites with video are 53 times more likely to appear on the first page of the Google search engine than any other form of content. Use Video to help improve rankings and drive traffic to your site. Data Courtesy of VScreen.

Data Supplied by Google Dec. 2012.

You will notice that how to's are a common search on YouTube, so becoming the video expert and offering up how to's as a real estate professional can get you where many of the consumers are. It's a unique twist that is also social media friendly as it qualifies for good content worth sharing on your social media channels.

- Number of agent-related videos on YouTube
  19,200 results for how to find a real estate agent
  88,400 results for real estate agent
  118,000 for buying a home
  21,800 how to get a mortgage loan
- Finding an agent and agent related searches on YouTube grew **46%** year-over-year
- Rising searches in "buying a house" category
  Renting an Apartment
  Renting vs. Buying
  House Buying Process
  Renting a House
- Search terms in open house category
  Overall **+23%** year-over-year
  Fall **+38%** year-over-year
  Spring **+14%** year-over-year

YouTube Moves People to Choose Your Brand

Users

*YouTube's US community of over **152M unique users** are:*

Mobile

40% of YouTube watchtime is on mobile and tablet devices[1]

Social

OVER 100M social interactions are made on YouTube every day[1]

Valuable

YouTube reaches:

82% OF M18-34[4]
80% OF YOUNG MOMS 18-34[4]
75% OF MULTICULTURALS 18-34[4]

Advertisers

100 of the **AdAge Top 100** Leading Advertisers invest on YouTube[2]

4 WAYS TO GET STARTED

Creators

YouTube Creators Provide:

Passionate Fans

50% increase in watch time vs. last year[1]

A Safe Environment

BRAND SAFETY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

all content rated similarly to TV & Movies:
DV-G / DV-PG / DV-T / DV-MA

TrueView

The Lowdown

Ad formats that automatically find your target by **letting them choose you**. Free yourself from 15 or 30 second time limits.

The Stats

2.4x more efficient compared to pre-roll in impact per GRP[3]

Three Formats

in-stream
Skippable or Forced. Reserved or Auction. Choose the option that's best for you.

in-search
Share your message alongside relevant search results and video pages.

in-display
Spread your story on YouTube watch pages and across the GDN.

Channels

The Lowdown

Build your home on YouTube in the image of your brand. Engage your consumers with **curated content and social interactivity**.

One Channel

1 consistent and beautiful brand design across all screens

Curate your content with sections
Flexibility to arrange your videos however you please.

Connect your associated channels
Link to relevant channels directly from your page.

Live Example: youtube.com/intelchannel
Learn More: youtube.com/onechannel

Sponsorships

The Lowdown

Drive **brand awareness, engagement and affinity** through association with our top content creators and buzz-worthy sponsorship events.

Sponsorship Types

Events
Engage with your target audience during events that matter to them.
Examples: youtube.com/Coachella youtube.com/CirqueduSoleil and more

Evergreen
Establish an ongoing presence and dialogue with your audience.
Examples: youtube.com/Grantland youtube.com/AwesomenessTV and more

Show & Intergration
Authentic integration of your brand into YouTube programming.

Homepage

The Lowdown

Our most prominent page is **your blank canvas** for engaging, impactful rich media experiences.

The Stats

Every day there are

60M VIEWS & 23M UNIQUE VISITORS

to the YouTube homepage[1]

Case Study

Dermablend

A video masthead led to brand search uplift, correlated with **230%** increase in sales.[5]

Always on — **Flighted**

Resources

Learn More: **www.google.com/think/youtube**
Subscribe: **www.youtube.com/user/advertise**
Monitor: **The YouTube Ads Leaderboard**

Sources

1. YouTube Internal Data
2. AdAge Marketer Trees 2012, Google Internal Data
3. YouTube Brand Research, Sept 2012
4. comScore, October 2012, % reach of web population
5. 'The Secrets of Social Retail', Kim Bhasin, Business Insider, December 1, 2012

YouTube

Comprehensive Lead Metrics are at *our* CORE.

CORE, an innovative new CRM and Drip Marketing platform from One Cavo, is designed to give real estate brokerages metrics and insight to help you better understand what is happening with online leads, while calculating ROI on your Internet marketing investments.

Improve your ability to increase and measure lead conversion rates with CORE from One Cavo!

- Dramatically enhance real estate brokerages' ability to increase and measure lead conversion rates.
- Track specific contact & conversion center metrics regarding the quality of leads coming in from 3rd party sites.
- Determine ROI on leads being converted by each 3rd party lead source.
- Detailed reports on lead status & lead assignment, agent responsiveness, and consumer survey data.
- True agent accountability in terms of responsiveness to consumers and the brokerage.
- Maximize lead conversion opportunities by responding to every Internet lead in less than 15 minutes.
- Protect *your* brand image.

Helping real estate companies increase their internet lead conversion rate, build their online brand and increase their core services.

One Cavo is an outsourced Lead Response, Distribution, Incubation and Reporting Company that exclusively serves the Real Estate Industry. One Cavo CORE and One Cavo Lead Convertor, are revolutionizing how brokerages measure their online marketing dollars with 3rd party lead generation sites, while increasing conversions.

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Converting Real Estate Traffic on Your Website

Now that we have seen the importance of a mobile website, mobile app, and even mobile CRM let's take a deep dive into how we can use big data to increase the effectiveness of your current lead conversion strategy. Tracking conversions is a big part of using big data to make you a more efficient real estate operation.

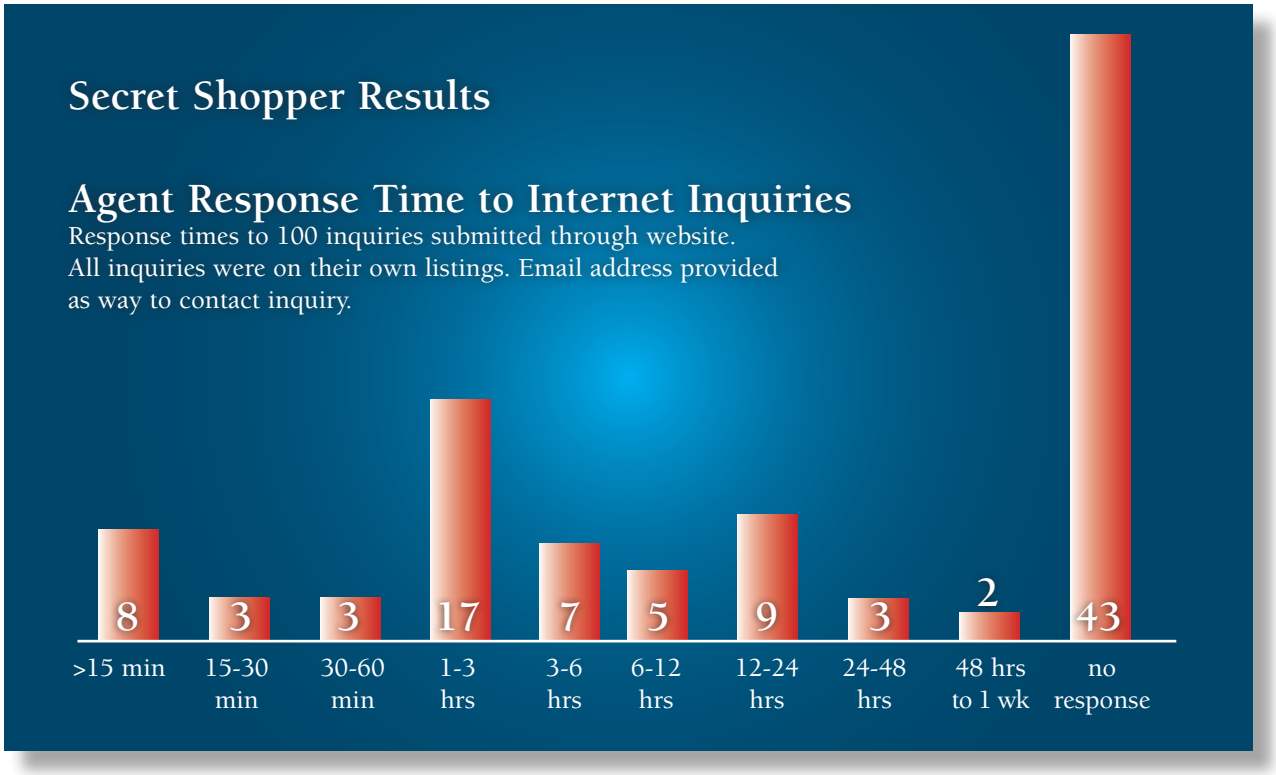
Underlying Issue with Lead Conversion is Agent Accountability

Before you go spending an exorbitant amount of time, resources and financial commitment to creating the best lead generation and conversion system make sure your organization or if you're a real estate sales professional, has the capability to handle and respond to these leads. Studies show that the average real estate consumer now expects a response in less than 30 minutes. However, what is more important is that a study from insidesales.com shows that if you can respond to a lead within 5 minutes you are 5 times more likely to convert that lead than if you wait to respond in the ten minute range. So response time is super critical when qualifying leads. The web and mobile features have created this environment where a consumer may dedicate or actually be in a neighborhood looking at properties and if the sales professional they contacted didn't respond, often times they will move on to the next, closing that window of opportunity much quicker than in the past. We are in an on-demand culture and we need to equip our sales professionals with the right tools to be able to respond even when they are busy.

Agent Response Times as a Unique Competitive Advantage

In last year's Online Performance Study we saw a case study that was representative of the industry as a whole and the statistics were alarming. To emphasize this point we are showing you the same study from last year and unique statistics conducted again this year.

Last Year's Agent Response Time Case Study



2013 Agent Response Time Study with Larger Sample and Across Numerous Companies

We had a total of 67 companies participating in the secret shopper study with over 1,200 lead forms submitted in 2013.

- **45% of all leads received no response whatsoever.**
- **23% followed up with a phone call from the original lead submission.**

Now the hard thing to gauge when dealing with lead response times is what to do with the "no responses". For statistical purposes we will factor those out in table A and assign a value nearest to the longest recorded response times in table B:

Table A

Average Phone Response Time	Average Email Response Time
8 Hours and Ten Minutes from Submission	8 hours and 34 minutes from Submission

Table B
Assigning a no response value of 32 hours, which is the highest recorded response time in the study.

Average Phone Response Time	Average Email Response Time
14 hours and 21 minutes from Submission	17 hours and 15 minutes from Submission

The most alarming statistic was that of the 67 firms that participated in this study, the average no response time totaled 288 hours per form over the short time period.

Lead Flow, Setup and Response Time

Important Highlights from 2012 Online Performance Study

These are some of the most important metrics attained during the phone interviews. The consumer environment has shifted and now more than ever real estate professionals' response time is proving to be critical in the conversion of online leads.

- **90% of consumers did online research before they bought their last home.**
- **45% of consumers upon initial contact to an agent expect a response within 15 minutes.**
- **56% of consumers expect a response from their agent within 30 minutes.**
- **89% of consumers said that response time was very important when choosing their agent.**

With real estate consumers expecting a response within 30 minutes and 89% of them saying that response time is very important, then why do real estate professionals on average take over 14 hours to respond to a consumer?

Based upon internal case studies and broker participation it's estimated that 2 out of every 4 inquiries on a real estate website, listing aggregator such as Zillow®, trulia, and REALTOR.com® goes unresponded to.

This brings us to the results of the phone survey for the Online Performance Study. 42% of brokerages in the study had an e-Team in place to handle online leads (not associated with their own listing). 53% of firms distributed all online leads evenly throughout their brokerage. The average e-Team consisted of 40.4 agents and the average brokerage with e-Teams had 791 agents. Essentially the e-Team consisted of only 5% of all agents in the firm. There are a few factors that come into play when establishing the

agents of an e-Team and why it would only be 5% of the agent population:

1. Agents don't want to pay the referral fee.

2. Agents aren't tech savvy enough to accept leads and follow up in that method.

3. Agents are held to swifter response times and standards.

4. Some teams require specific notes and updates required in their CRM.

5. Some e-Teams require a closing percentage standard to remain on the team.

6. Some brokerages limit the number of agents that can be on their e-Team.

26% of firms in the study did not charge a referral on general online leads. Of the remaining firms that did, the average referral fee was 28% with the values ranging from 20% to 35%.

For response times mandated prior to reassigning the leads, 47% of firms had no rules in place for this. The 53% of firms that did have a rule in place averaged a mandatory response time of 27 minutes before they reassigned the lead with the low being a 10-minute threshold. The firms that had an e-Team in place saw per agent productivity increase by 1.5 transactions per agent/per year from an average of 8.6 for those without e-Team to 10.1 to those with.

The reason the above statistics are so important is that online consumers are much more demanding and giving them an instant response increases the percentage of inquiries that convert to actual quality leads. With this being said, an e-Team is not necessary but the diligence shown with the companies involved in this study proves better results. This could easily be accomplished through training, as some firms without e-Teams outperformed those with an e-Team.

Conversions and Goals

Conversions in Google Analytics are extremely easy to set up and frankly most real estate websites could have them set up in about 15-30 minutes. Your typical real estate site has about 4 ways to contact you via online inquiry with some variations mixed in: 1) direct to agent, 2) direct through general contact form, 3) a few specialty forms in some cases and 4) on a particular listing.

Setting up conversions is hands down one of the easiest things you can do to start gauging the effectiveness of your website and particular forms/pages, social media, search engine marketing and optimization, and referring traffic sources. The easiest way to describe this is to give you a few examples:

Wouldn't you like to know how well Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest and more are performing for you? Beyond the normal traffic tallies? Well with conversions you can easily see your social conversions and how many actual inquiries sites like Facebook are sending your way. No more guessing game.

How about sites like REALTOR.com®, trulia and Zillow®? Set up is as easy as pie to gauge the effectiveness of this traffic.

Ever wanted to know how well a certain page performs compared to another, or have you ever wanted to track what percentage of visitors view listings, school info or market stats then inquire? All simple with Conversions and Goals in Google Analytics.

With these examples stated there are only **58% of the brokerages** in the study tracking conversions at all within the past year. 95% of these brokerages also conduct search engine marketing and pairing the two can be a great way to increase the effectiveness of your campaigns. For tips on how to set up conversion tracking in their simplest form visit the glossary portion of this study.

Intelligent Algorithms Related To Lead Generation And Cultivation

Big data can be used in every aspect of the real estate process. We have stated it can help deliver properties based on drive time, it can aid in pinpointing the right consumer across multiple mediums and now we are going to show you how it can increase your conversion rates and online advertising effectiveness.

Intelligent, high speed algorithms demonstrate a significant improvement in overall lead generation efficacy when applied to bid based advertising platforms such as Google AdWords. High-speed algorithms have the ability to execute multiple actions after considering tens of thousands of data points over a very frequent time frame. As they relate to bid based advertising platforms, high-speed algorithms can adjust bids based on real time analytics to ensure optimal application of budgets.

We applied this methodology to search engine marketing campaigns and the research shows increased effectiveness in numerous areas.

Evidenced by our research, most markets saw decrease in Cost Per Click (CPC), which allowed for more clicks at constant or improved conversion rate, which equates to a lower Cost Per Lead (CPL) and more leads in general.

Summary data includes 50 broker accounts spread over 120 days, measuring 60 days prior to and after the algorithms' implementation:

- **Number of overall leads increased by 118%**
- **Number of impressions increased 82.6%**
- **Number of clicks increased 57.7%**
- **Conversion rate increased by 38.2%**
- **Cost Per Click decreased by 34.9%**
- **Cost Per Lead decreased by 52.7%**

For the purpose of this study, behavioral algorithms are those that intelligently "suggest" contacting a lead, and why, based on a pre-defined cluster of actions that have proven over time to yield successful results. Successful results are defined as a positive interaction with a lead.

168 respondents reported the following when presented with behavioral algorithm driven lead opportunities/suggestions:

- **88.7% found the suggestions worth acting on.**
- **There was a significant increase in the frequency of successful results when engaging the technology compared to not using it.**
- **51.2% set up at least one showing in the prior 2-week period.**
- **47% had a valid and actionable opportunity suggested that otherwise would have been ignored.**

Systems that provide high speed algorithms to increase lead generation efficacy, coupled with behavioral algorithms that cultivate those leads into actionable opportunities, stand to significantly decrease the substantial and expensive inefficiencies that plague the $14B online real estate marketing and advertising industry.

There are only a handful of technology companies that will use behavioral data to surface the most likely lead candidates. With increased conversion rates from new leads and proactive measures to gauge when past clients jump back into the market, technology can be your new real estate advisor.

Examples of using big data:

REAL *Trends* recently spoke with a high producing sales professional that indicated her sphere of influence is where she gets most of her business. She asked, "Why would I want to use a CRM system?" The agent took a complete 180 when she was informed about the many benefits of a smart CRM system, such as surfacing past clients that may be ready to jump back into the market before the agent even knows they are ready. This type of data flow and behavioral data flowing from the website into the CRM system is a prime example of why a well oiled CRM is critical to a real estate professional these days.

Another example would be a change in circumstance, volume, type, and more. What happens when a client you are working with all of a sudden completely changes their real estate search. An opportunity to converse is the correct answer! Without technology working for you what is stopping that person from engaging someone else or letting more time slip away.

The Before and After Evidence for Big Data in Lead Generation and Conversion

Examination of search engine marketing efficacy before and after a behavioral based algorithm was applied.

	Before	After	% Difference
# of Impressions	1,480,221	2,703,629	82.65%
# of Clicks	74,911	118,140	57.71%
Cost Per Click	$1.49	$0.97	-34.90%
# of Overall Leads	5,030	10,967	118.03%
Conversion Rate	6.71%	9.28%	38.25%
Cost Per Lead	$24.67	$11.66	-52.73%

Case Study: The Corcoran Group uses Google AdWords display advertising and data from Google Analytics to build a thriving mobile marketing strategy

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With the motto "live who you are," The Corcoran Group understands that real estate is never just about a house or an apartment – it's about an emotional connection. Founded in 1973, Corcoran is now the largest residential real estate firm in New York City, and has expanded into other luxury markets such as the Hamptons and South Florida. Today, the company has a total of 26 offices and over 2,000 agents generating over $18 billion in sales annually.

Seizing the mobile opportunity

The entrepreneurial firm has built a competitive advantage through savvy use of technology. In 1995, Corcoran launched one of the first real estate websites, corcoran.com. Today, it attracts more than 4 million visitors per month.

As a technology innovator, Corcoran saw a major opportunity to differentiate its brand and capture the undivided time and attention of sophisticated smartphone users. The company developed one of the first location-based mobile apps for real estate in 2009, the free Corcoran App. A significant departure from the typical online "checkbox and dropdown menu" property search, the app highlights nearby shopping, nightlife, and dining experiences across hundreds of venues – complete with reviews, photos,

and even details such as how to get the best deals in a clothing store or what to order from a menu. There's an easy way to contact an agent directly from within the applications.

"Our mobile-specific initiatives are a strong brand differentiator and a way to build closer relationships with both active real estate shoppers and those who may be on the market in the future," says Matthew Shadbolt, director of interactive product & marketing for Corcoran.

Getting a handle on mobile user behaviors

Corcoran uses Google Analytics for mobile in two primary ways: to manage the conversion funnel during campaigns, and also to understand users' behaviors when they engage with Corcoran's interactive services so that the offerings can be improved. For example, Corcoran knows that users often go to their desktop computers on Thursdays to chart out open houses they want to see on Sunday – then mobile usage starts to spike on the weekend. Desktop users are planners; mobile users are "out and about" – and the company can take advantage of that intelligence to devise smarter campaigns.

The data also shows that Android users spend more in-depth time in the app than on other smartphone platforms. Shadbolt says most Corcoran Android users are using the "near me" search functionality, with about 15% of the overall users performing dedicated searches. Most Android users are also seeking out properties for sale as opposed to rentals – and a large percentage of the properties are in downtown Manhattan. People are actively using the bookmark/save listing feature on Android as well. "We have a strong return visitor rate, so we know those who install the app on Android are using it often," says Shadbolt.

Data versus hunches

Corcoran wields this type of intelligence from Google Analytics to drive its mobile products' success and growth. From an advertising perspective, monitoring the performance of campaigns, constantly iterating and refining creative, and truly understanding what is working and why: all these are critical factors in Corcoran's overall interactive strategy.

According to Shadbolt, the company strives for more effective use of resources through improving click through rates, optimizing user experiences, streamlining navigation and also experimenting with new formats – and Google Analytics is a key factor in determining that success and building on it.

"We have seen significant increase in downloads, time spent using mobile services, and content sharing within both our iPhone and Android apps as a direct result of the findings within Google Analytics," Shadbolt says.

Streamlining complex mobile ad campaigns

Google Analytics helps simplify campaign management, even when campaigns are spread across a broad spectrum of advertising partners from The New York Times, to Zillow, CNN and The New York Post. The company runs display advertising within those apps that drives awareness of its products and encourages users to download the app to their smartphones. "We have seen a response rate for mobile advertising be about 7 to 8 times higher in terms of CTR than that of desktop campaigns," he says.

"Google Analytics provides data that we can translate to everything associated with the product - its user interface, its content, its promotional materials, and essentially its future. Without Google Analytics, none of these would be possible."

Shadbolt notes that Google Analytics has made the company smarter when purchasing advertising programs and developing interactive user experiences. Being able to truly understand success factors, both internally within its services, as well as externally with other advertisers, has been a critical tool in building Corcoran's interactive future, according to Shadbolt.

"Without Google Analytics, we'd be blind to what our users are doing, which is essentially interactive suicide. Without a meaningful, deep, insightful understanding of user behavior and ad performance, it's impossible to develop strong products," he says. "Google Analytics provides data that we can translate to everything associated with the product - its user interface, its content, its promotional materials, and essentially its future. Without Google Analytics, none of these would be possible.

#Trending: One Year's Time—Website Traffic Overall Observations

#Mobile

While we have already observed that the number of mobile visits has maintained a significant increase from last year, it is important to note some of the additional trends that have resulted from tracking mobile statistics.

One observation that we have tracked from year to year is device usage. Understanding what the most popular mobile devices are accessing websites provides excellent insight to brokerages on how they need to design their mobile sites so they are user friendly to these key devices.

The most popular device to frequent brokerage websites on a monthly basis is the iPad, making up 40% of monthly mobile visits. The iPhone follows closely behind making up 30% of mobile traffic. Devices running Android make up the remaining 30% of monthly mobile traffic. When comparing these statistics to last year, the iPad has taken 3% more of mobile traffic from the iPhone, while Android devices have maintained.

Another interesting trend that has shown change year to year is the average number of pages viewed per visit by the type of device being used. Those visiting a website via a tablet tend to view almost twice as many pages compared to those visiting via a mobile phone. A direct correlation between this trend is the visit duration. On average, a tablet user remained on a website three times longer than a mobile phone user – this is very motivational on ensuring a tablet calibrated website.

#SERP

When looking at trends within Search Engine Results Page, the majority of brokerage websites within our sample did not experience any major movement. However, there were some outliers that were able to significantly improve their SEO performance.

The key contributor to obtaining better SEO results was to implement an AdWord Campaign that did not contain their brokerage name within their top 10 keywords.

#SearchEnginePerformance

Google continues to dominate the search engine space (sorry Bing, thanks for the great pictures though!) grabbing 81.31% of searches, up from 78.39% in 2012. Second place goes to Bing, with an average search percentage of 8.44%, dipping slightly from last year's 8.79%.

Yahoo! claims third place capturing 7.07% of searches, dipping very slightly from last year's 7.66%.

#SocialMedia

Facebook continues to be the most popular Social Media outlet in the real estate industry. When comparing Facebook "Likes" from last year, brokerages with an active Facebook campaign were able to almost double their amount of "Likes". Website referral and pages per visit from Facebook remained unchanged from last year.

Pinterest and LinkedIn were the only other two Social Media sites that yielded any value to real estate brokerages. The average monthly referral from LinkedIn was 10, and from Pinterest was 16. Although the referral numbers were considerably low, the average pages per visit from LinkedIn and Pinterest users were much higher than Facebook suggesting better quality leads.

The final Social Media outlet that we have tracked two years running is Twitter. This year there was not a single referral from Twitter. While last year, there was just that – a single referral from Twitter.

Overall visits from Social Media referrals increased over last year by 17.6%

#Aggregators
There was some movement this year with referral quantity and quality from the major national aggregators. When taking a glance back to last year the website that yielded the most referrals was trulia, offering an averaged number of 625 referral visits per month. Upon compiling this year results, trulia still maintains the number one spot for number of referrals. However, the referral average has dropped to an average of 235 referrals per month.

Quality of leads was determined by computing a ratio of pages per visit to number of referrals. Last year Realtor.com provided the highest quality of leads with an average referral number of 208 per month and 8.62 page views. This year, trulia put out the highest quality of leads with an average of 235 referrals a month with an average page view number of 3.52.

We thought it was interesting to note that every single aggregator that we have tracked has decreased its number of referrals provided from last year to this year. A few aggregators have dropped their referral numbers by more than half. These include: Homefinder.com, trulia, Homes.com, and RealEstate.com. The remaining aggregator sources just had slight decreases: Zillow and Realtor.com.

#Craigslist
A powerful referral tool that might be overlooked is Craigslist, which yielded the second highest monthly referrals following Facebook. This is a free tool that can easily be updated with up to date listings to MLS specific regions.

A word of caution:

We have recently come to the knowledge that programs that automatically post listings to Craigslist are illegal. There have been legal actions taken against brokerages that have implemented these auto-posting programs.

#Yellowpages
Yellowpages.com is another referral tool that is often not considered. Those that actively engage Yellowpages.com experienced very high quality leads. There were numerous brokerages who saw visitors that had between 4 and 18 page views.

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Brokerage Online Analytic Trends

Comparative Sample Snapshot—September 2013

2013 Online Performance Study, Average Brokerage Numbers:

Visits: 55,063

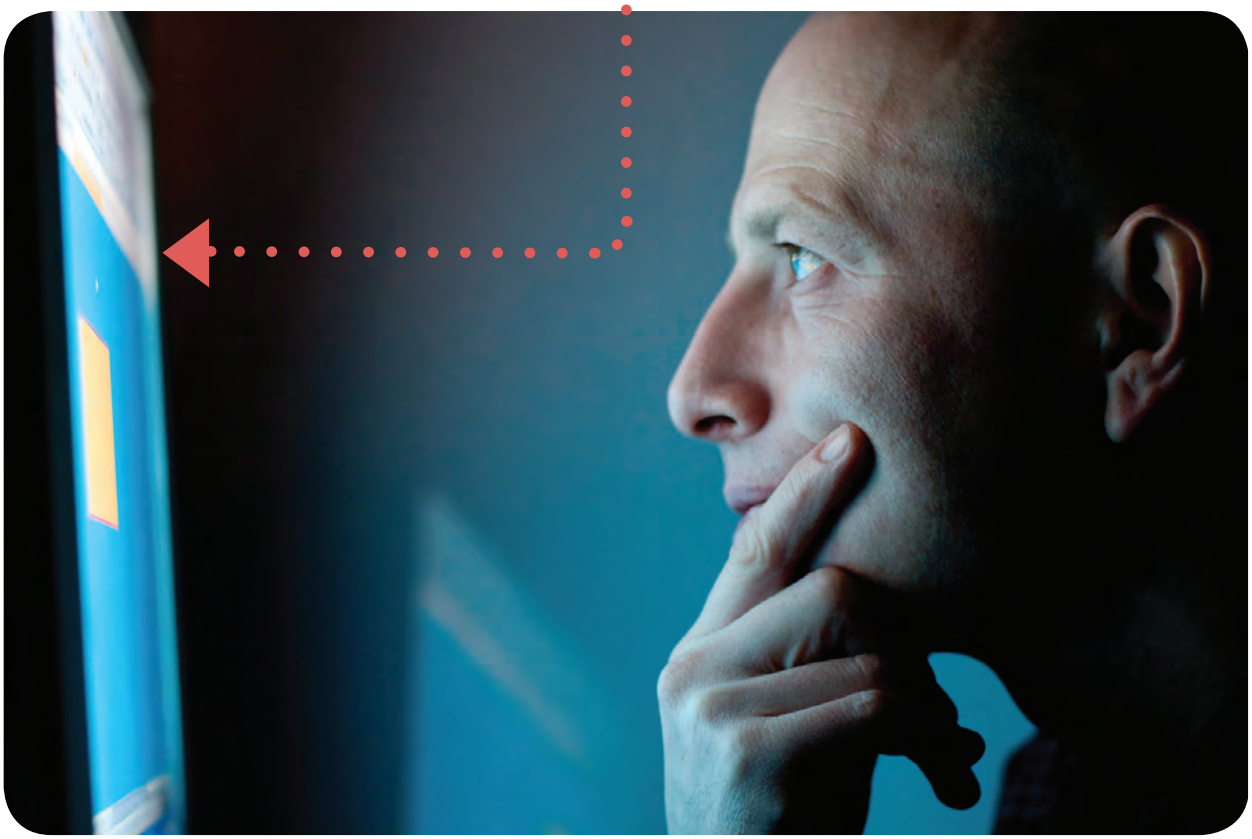
Unique Visits: 32,167

Pageviews: 463,990

Pages Per Visit: 7.15

Average Time on Site: 5 Minutes and 31 Seconds

Average Bounce Rate Percentage: 39.09%

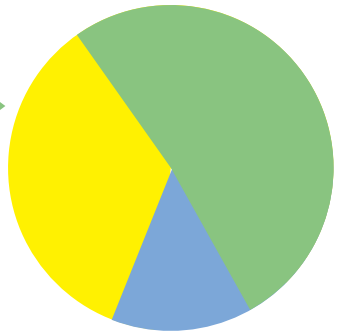


Online Traffic Source Breakdown

Overall Percentage of Search Traffic: 50.93%

Overall Percentage of Direct Traffic: 33.17%

Overall Percentage of Referral Traffic: 15.06%



For clarification, the search traffic is traffic accumulated from all search engines. Direct is someone typing in the website traffic or bookmarking the page and the referral traffic accounts for all outside websites. Common referral sources are social media, listing aggregators, directories and more.

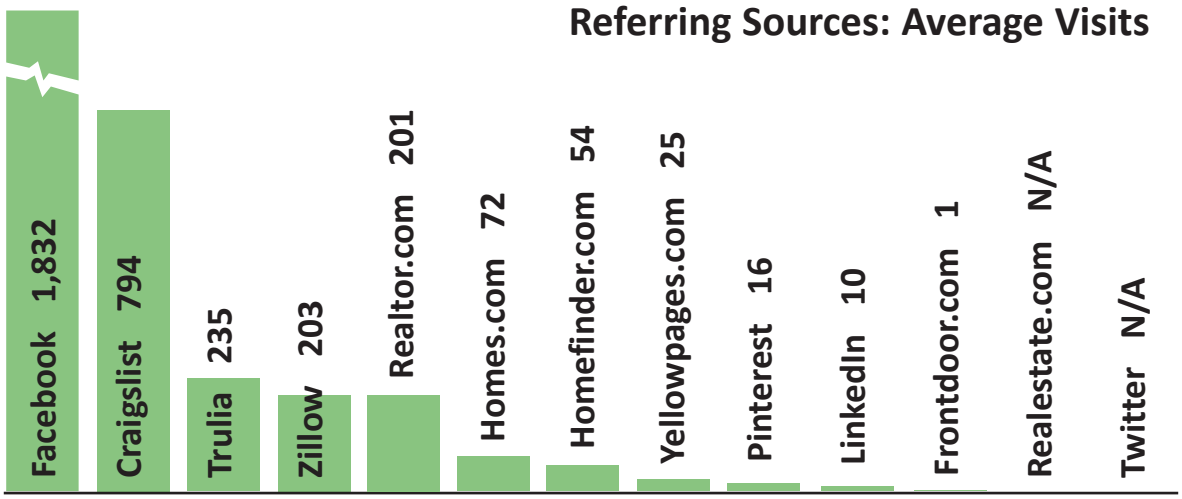
Among the search traffic, Google is king with 81.34% of all the search traffic coming from Google. Some would argue that Google search traffic is less valuable than all other traffic but statistics show that may not be the case in some instances with nearly 6 pages per visit but actually spending just as much time on brokerage websites as the average visits. Bing saw a pretty big leap over last year with 8.44% of all search traffic and Yahoo was third at 7.07%.

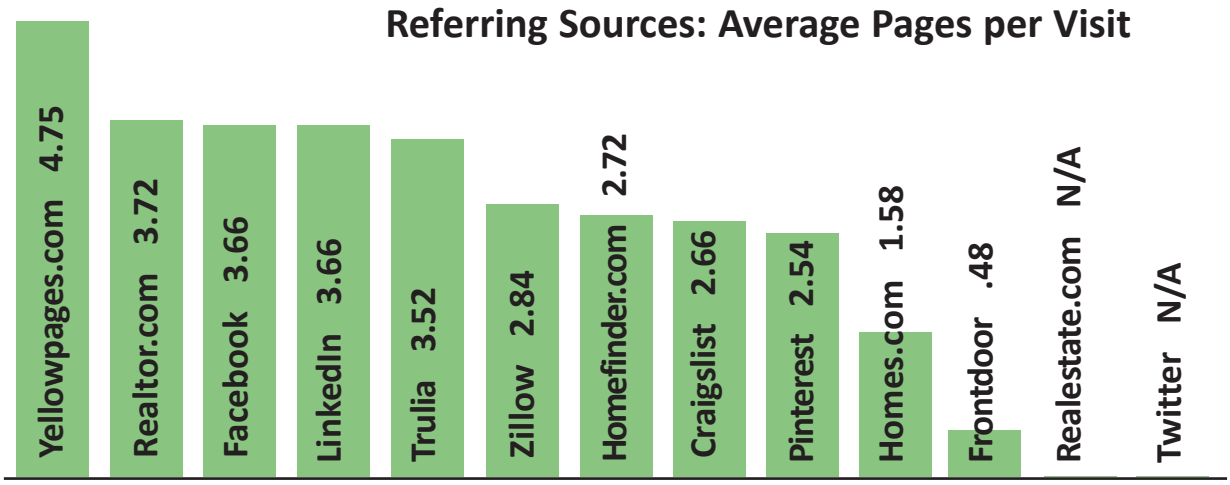
Important note: In past years studies we have taken many of these numbers at face value. However, after many observations and when dealing with technology insiders, it is important to point out that many people have gotten in a habit of using Google as their direct traffic portal. Instead of typing in the URL of the brokerage they simply Google it and click on the first result. This is evident when analyzing the numbers deeper. We looked at the top 10 keywords used for each brokerage in the study and found that they only average 1.68 out of 10 keywords that do not include their full company name. For example if REAL *Trends* were a real estate brokerage many of the terms would be like the following:

REAL *Trends* Realty
REAL *Trends* Real Estate
Realtrends.com

These are for example purposes but as we look further we notice that these "lazy searches" or misleading searches account for 23% of all real estate website traffic. While this is not entirely lazy searches and is very valuable traffic it does put into perspective the role search plays in the traffic breakdown. So, even though over 50% of visits land on a brokerage from a search engine it's likely 20% of that traffic would have found it anyway without the search engines they just chose to use the search bar instead of the URL field in their browser.

Referral Traffic Sources in 2013





Search Engine Ranking Placements (SERPs)

We analyzed four very common search terms and used analytics to actually determine the most common search terms that led visitors to brokerage websites. Those terms were (using Denver, CO as an example):

1) Real Estate in Primary Market – Real Estate in Denver, CO
2) Primary Market Real Estate – Denver Real Estate
3) Homes For Sale Primary Market – Homes for Sale Denver, CO
4) Primary Market Realtors - Denver, CO Realtors

The average search engine placement for the brokerage firms in the study were as follows respectively:

1) 9th Position on the search results
2) 7th Position on the search results
3) 9th Position on the search results
4) 8th Position on the search results

The average for all of the search results we compiled was 10th position. It is important to note we had to factor out several of the companies in the study for this portion as they simply were not found on the first 10 pages of Google.

Website Speed Performance:

The average real estate brokerage in the 2013 Online Performance Study boasted a speed of 5.02 seconds for every page load. The high in this portion was 9 and a half seconds with the low a blazing 2.7 seconds.

User Engagement on Real Estate Websites

Several statistics can be highly related to a user's engagement and satisfaction with a website. The most indicative is the average time spent on the site. To benchmark your site against the average of real estate brokerages consider this:

The average time a consumer spent on a real estate brokerage site was 5 minutes and 25 seconds with the absolute best coming in at 9 minutes and 45 seconds.

Alternatively, average pages per visit can a bit more loosely be related to user engagement. In some situations brokerages may choose to display properties in a format that doesn't count every new property as a new pageview. In those settings the user engagement can be a bit misleading if strictly choosing average pages per visit. Consider the following:

The average pages per visit on a brokerage website was 7.15

Operating Systems Breakdown

Remember the age old question—Mac versus PC? Well it's just not that simple anymore. Here is the breakdown by percentage of the top operating systems of brokerage website visits:

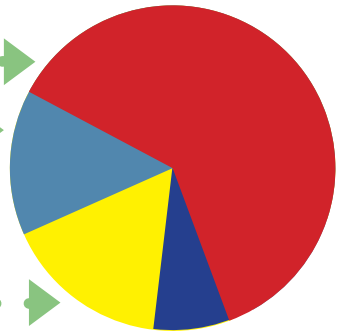
Operating systems used by brokerage website visitors

Windows: 62%

Mac (desktop version): 15%

iOS: 16%

Android: 9%



Zillow®

Online Marketing Made My Business

Phil Faranda opened shop in mid-2005 as a sole broker working out of a spare room in the house he grew up in Westchester County, N.Y. In the eight years since, he's grown a strong real estate brokerage with 34 associates.

"And let's not let anyone forget the market tanked in 2007," he says.

Faranda's succeed-in-spite-of-the-economy strategies had nothing to do with luck and everything to do with his focus on technology, innovation and client advocacy.

"By March 2006, I'd been open nine months and I'd sold three houses," he says. "I remember my wife suggesting maybe I should stay home with the kids and she could find a job. I asked her if she was so smart, what she'd do differently."

Stop advertising in the New York Times, she suggested.

"I freaked out," he says. "I asked her, 'If we can't advertise in the Times, how will anyone know about our listings?'"

The upside to having closed only three deals was that it didn't take long for Faranda to see where his leads were coming from: Online – three for three.

"That's when we stopped print advertising and signed up with a company that for $100 per month would put our listings on Zillow and Trulia," he says. "From June to December 2006, we had 29 closings. In 2007, we had 62 closings. If that's not an ah-ha kind of moment, I don't know what is."

Upon seeing value in Internet marketing, Faranda set out to expand his online presence via outlets including Facebook, Google Plus, Twitter, Instagram, Foursquare, Vine, YouTube and Quora. He set up his own blog – westchesterrealestateblog.net – and has since posted approximately 1,400 entries on topics ranging from the mortgage interest deduction to the protocol of home inspections.

"I began blogging for therapeutic reasons because the market was so s#$%*&," he says. "Every time I sold something I would blog about it. Every time I got a listing, I would blog about it. If I tied my shoe without having to start over, I blogged about it. It doesn't hurt that I am a ridiculously good BS'er, but none of this was really earth-shattering news."

As a single operator going up against established local real estate agencies and nationally recognized companies, Faranda was using the Internet to create the impression that his company was bigger than it was.

PHIL FARANDA

J. Philip Real Estate LLC

J. Philip Real Estate is one of Westchester County's premier independent brokerages. Founded in 2005, the firm has grown from a single broker to a strong organization of well over 30 associates. The team's commitment to results and client advocacy, as well as our focus on technology and innovation, have positioned us as the "go to" brokerage for Westchester buyers and sellers.

"I was working on a foldout table in my parents' old bedroom with my kids playing in the next room and people were calling me saying, 'I've seen you're in New Rochelle,' or 'I've seen you've got listings in Rhinebeck,'" he says.

His new status as a tech-savvy marketer with fresh ideas led to an invitation to serve on his local MLS board. Which, of course, he blogged about.

"The MLS board gave me a stamp of legitimacy," he says. "And, before we knew it, five or six agents a year were joining our company."

The Westchester N.Y. agent is now serving his fourth term as vice president of the Empire Access Multiple Listing Service. He also serves as Director for the New York State Association of Realtors (NYSAR), vice chairman of the NYSAR Tech Forum and is one of 20 agents nationwide selected to serve on Zillow's Agent Advisory Board.

Faranda's currently spending nearly $3,000 monthly for online marketing services, Web hosting, client relationship programs, lead router systems and video email services – and he's constantly reevaluating to make sure he's getting the biggest bang for his buck.

"In this industry, you've got to allocate funds where they're doing the most good," he says. "For instance, I still have a Trulia profile but, about two years ago, I stopped paying for their services. Around the same time, I became a Premier Agent with Zillow; it was a good business move for me."

J. Philip Real Estate LLC now receives 90 percent of its leads via online channels. Of course, Faranda knows that just getting leads isn't enough; there needs to be follow up – and fast.

"Speed is essential to making conversions happen," he says. "When a lead comes in, we're notified by text and email and that lead is forwarded to one of our agents based on geographic preferences and other factors. Ideally, our agent will send a short introduction video email to the prospective client within 20 minutes."

Faranda acknowledges that short response time isn't a guarantee that he'll land a client, but it sends a strong message about his company's responsiveness and organization.

"Technology has changed consumers' expectations," he says. "We're doing everything we can to exceed those expectations, with the full realization that what we're doing today may well be improved upon next month."

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It starts with our living database of more than 110 million U.S. homes - including homes for sale, homes for rent and homes not currently on the market. Add to that Zestimate® home values, Rent Zestimates and lots of other useful information you won't find anywhere else, and as a result, consumers are given an edge in real estate.

Under the Zillow brand, Zillow operates Zillow.com, Zillow Mobile, Zillow Mortgage Marketplace, Zillow Rentals, and Zillow Digs. Zillow's portfolio also includes StreetEasy®, HotPads™ and several other businesses - Buyfolio™, Diverse Solutions®, Mortech™ and Postlets® -- that provide a robust and growing suite of tools and services to help local real estate, mortgage, rental and home improvement professionals better manage and market their businesses.

In addition, Zillow operates the largest real estate and rental advertising networks in the U.S. in partnership with Yahoo! Homes. Through the Yahoo!-Zillow Real Estate Network and the Zillow Rental Network, advertisers get the value of having their listings distributed to the largest audience of home shoppers and renters in the U.S. via Zillow.com, Zillow Mobile and Yahoo! Homes.

Founded in 2005, the company is headquartered in Seattle with offices in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Irvine, Calif. and Lincoln, Neb.

Tips for Future Growth

Data Trends

- Consider smart search (Google like) for your property search.
- Consider adding drive time to your website to appease the digital age consumer.

Mobile Trends

- Consider a mobile CRM to allow your agents to be more productive on the go.
- Invest in a mobile website so the high percentage of visitors coming to your site will be engaged and stay longer.
- Add easy to use call to actions on your mobile site or mobile app.
- Use your mobile website to market your mobile app. It's the surest way to high consumer adoption rates.

Social Media Marketing

- Consider running marketing campaigns on LinkedIn and Facebook. They are a highly targeted way to place your ad in front of the audience you care about. Great for recruiting.
- Build an editorial/social media calendar for your blogging and social media activity. Having it recorded ensures you get it done. Consider our content categories we identified as the most impactful and get busy sharing or if you are short on time consider a service like CityBlast to outsource your local social media presence.

Infographics

- All too often we see real estate brokerages paste large amounts of data on housing statistics, market data, etc. on their websites. This data is hard to interpret, share and digest for your average housing consumer. Many third party companies that supply these reports do so in an undigestible fashion as well. We recommend using infographics as a way to share this data in an easily digestible format. Infographics are quick and easy to create with numerous online editing sources such as info.gram, easel.ly and PiktoChart (with the latter being our favorite).
- Infographics also have a big social media impact. They tend to be shared, like and interacted with more then regular content and data.
- If you simply don't have the time to do it yourself then employ a company like visual.ly to create, design and in some cases disseminate your infographic.
- Next time you have a bunch of data or information to release consider an eye pleasing infographic!

Search Engine Marketing:

- Determine your search engine strengths and weaknesses prior to embarking.
- Make sure to use conversions to track your Google AdWords. Typically the rifle versus shotgun approach will gain you better results. Be diligent. Don't just set and forget.
- Set a budget and stick with it. Make this part of your overall marketing budget.
- Find your niche. Target specific areas, neighborhoods, etc. don't simply compete and pay big dollars for high rankings especially if you have a lower budget. Be strategic and try to nail those 7th-8th positions for as many relevant keywords as you can.
- If you can't compete buy your way to the top. Especially when it comes to your competition. By this I mean get your competitors' names and variations in AdWords it may help you land a few extra visitors every month. This is especially true if you have a complex name, URL, or spelling. Some consumers may just be having a hard time finding you and resorting to the competition, thus seeing you when they search for them can gain you some traffic.
- Track, Track, Track. Make adjustments and track some more.

Search Engine Optimization:

- According to our data the most successful firms combine outsourcing and in-house SEO. Outsourcing gives you a fresh perspective and competitive advantage where as having the in-house commitment is key to implementing many of the strategies the SEO companies recommend.
- A good SEO company will give you not only technical support but Social and Blogging strategies as well. If you don't have these in effect you are greatly missing out on the link juices they give you.
- Track your search engine activity, find keywords that are/aren't working for you and adjust your content accordingly.
- Conversions and Goals in Google Analytics work well for tracking these initiatives as well.

Set up an e-Team or enforce more strict response standards:

- In our 2012 study, the average company with an e-Team had 27 minutes for a response time. This is a good time frame to start with. Some companies use the even lead distribution as their value proposition to their agents. We do feel this is just fine and we are not advocating removing that. If this is your firm, you still need stricter standards for response times as the research shows lack of follow up is costing your firm valuable leads and ultimately sales. Use this study as your reasoning to your agents. Since we found a 1.5 transactions per agents increase in 2012 this is nothing you would want to disregard.
- If you go full e-Team here are some examples of performance metrics typically required:
  1. Set closing percentage minimum thresholds.
  2. Set productivity levels assuming even distribution.
  3. Set minimum response times.
  4. Set minimum technology requirements, i.e. iPhone, iPad, Android and mobility requirements.
  5. Set follow up requirements beyond initial assessment. Require updates in CRM at 1 week, 3 week and 3 month marks.
  6. Use lead-specific automated drip marketing campaigns. Make sure agents are fully using these systems.
  7. Typical referral fees range between 30-35%; some vary based on the type and quality of the lead.
  8. Train and Track. This area is ever evolving and e-Team agents need to stay on top of the technology. New age consumers want to interact the same way the leads come in so if it's Facebook you may want to make sure your agents are versed and active (professionally) in social media channels. Require ongoing training.

Track your conversions to determine ROI and eliminate costs on expenditures that are not returning:

- Tracking conversions is an excellent way to track sources of business especially listing aggregators, social media, local advertising solutions, etc. This is also a great tool in refining your SEO and SEM campaigns.
- To start, identify all the methods in which consumers can contact you through your website. Run some fake leads through all methods. After you hit submit on every form, take note or copy the URL that shows post submission.
- If this URL is the same for all then your job gets a little easier and you only need to set up one goal in Google Analytics.
- If your URL is different you will get more info and drilled down data for which individual forms are performing better than others, but you will need to set up a goal for each one.
- Make a new URL destination goal within your Google Analytics profile. Copy and paste your link in there and leave exact match selected. If you know your cost per submission or inquiry based on data add that in there. This can then track ROI for you.
- Let the data flow and track your referral sources and what keywords are producing valuable traffic for you.

Set up an online marketing budget and include social media sites in this endeavor:

- Include Social Media in your budget and track results.
- Include SEO and SEM in your budget and track results.
- Seek out local online entities (newspapers, tv stations, etc.) and evaluate cost per thousand or other costing approaches and track for effectiveness.
- Include Listing Aggregators and syndicators like ListHub and Point2.
- Use Conversion tracking to constantly track and fine-tune these sources for effectiveness.

Get a blogging strategy and platform implemented.

- Not because everybody is doing it but because it is an integral part in a good SEO strategy.
- Determine your niche and stick with that. Trying to be all things to all people simply doesn't work and especially with SEO and blogging.
- Empower your agents. Some of the best blogs have blogging teams. Determine who is most likely to stick with it and reward them for their participation. Give them each an area, neighborhood or niche and get active. A good place to start is a new story/blog once a week.
- Use links within your blog stories; the more the merrier (within reason).
- Utilize your blog titles effectively. Be sure to incorporate the same keywords you're tracking and using in your SEO campaigns somewhere in your blog titles. This is key!

Automate your follow-up/relationship marketing:

- Drip marketing can be a powerful tool only if your agents use it.
- Take some of the burden off the agents and automate as much as you can. Some systems allow automatic triggers to initiate certain actions. Use them to your advantage and set up custom forms on your site to automatically add leads to drip campaigns.
- Establish a process within your organization to get social followers. Every buyer/seller should be added to a social campaign. Not only to stay in touch but to mine for life changing events, birthdays, anniversaries, etc. A good social media manager will be able to exploit this on your firm and your agents' behalf.
- Consumers are more and more used to drip marketing and eMarketing so mining or using a little lifestyle data goes a long way. For example, if they are dog lovers have a separate campaign for dog friendly parks, beaches, events, etc. They will love this and that connects to them.

Set up your YouTube video channel and get active:

- Same as blogging advice; establish your niche and stick with it.
- Neighborhood update videos and hot neighborhood topics are huge.
- Consider doing "Life Style" videos for every listing. Take the would-be buyer through what their life would look like if you lived in this home. Walk down the street and go to local establishments nearby. Tap into the emotional factor of buying a home.
- Be sure to use keywords in your video titles. One common mistake firms make is throwing a video on YouTube for a listing and the title is something like MLS123456.mpg, which gives you very little SEO value. A better example is "your address – city – state- neighborhood.mpg". This way you can get some search traffic as well.

Get local!

- Set up neighborhood pages on your website and include market demographics like those found on city-data.com or third party vendors. Utilize these pages to show you're an expert in these areas. Feed related blog stories to these pages and YouTube videos for extra SEO juice. You will truly become dominant in those neighborhoods fast.
- Set up Facebook groups and go door to door if need be to invite residents to join. Post pictures, videos, neighborhood updates, hot topics and more. Give free company swag or for example buy watermelons on summer holidays or decorations on other holidays.

Powered by Zip

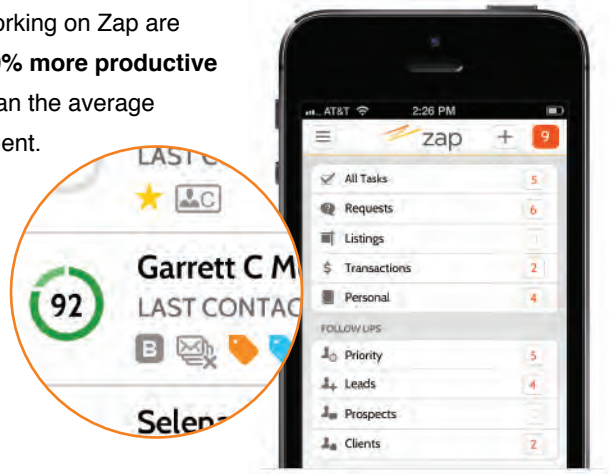
Powering the State of the Art Brokerage in the Digital Age

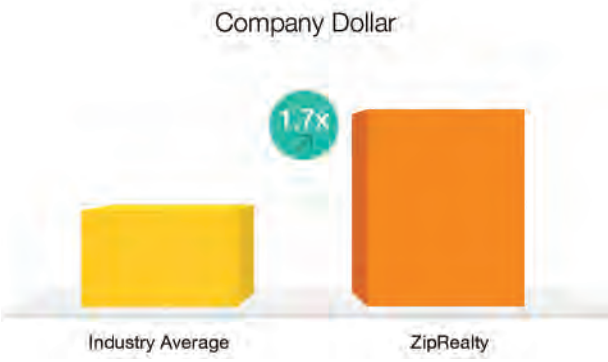
Reach Valuable Consumers

Today's most valuable real estate consumers conduct their search and connect with agents on their own terms, on their own timelines and on a combination of web and mobile devices. These connected consumers are **four times more likely to buy a home**. Our award-winning mobile app and website provide an optimal multi-screen experience, keeping consumers engaged throughout their home search.

Empower Agents

Zap, our multi-channel CRM, gives agents the ability to effectively conduct business in the office, at home and in the field. Engaged agents working on Zap are **50% more productive** than the average agent.





Increase Your Bottom Line

Brokers with engaged agents who meet consumers on their own terms ultimately **generate more company dollar for the brokerage bottom line**. Powered by Zip gives you insight into your brokerage operations and the tools you need to effectively compete in today's market.

POWERED BY ZipRealty.com TECHNOLOGY

Powered by Zip is the solution for brokerages in the digital age.

Get more info at pbzsales@ziprealty.com

Please see the ZipRealty report in this publication for full details.

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2013 Real Estate Brokerage Website Rankings

Methodology

While this is a ranking of a very large sample it does not include all national real estate brokerages. If you feel your website measures up to these 15 and would like to be included in next year's study please contact Travis Saxton at tsaxton@realtrends.com for inclusion. REAL *Trends* used 12 different categories to rank the top performing real estate websites. Those categories are in no particular order or weight:

- **Average Pages Per Visit**
- **Average Bounce Rate**
- **Average Time on Site**
- **Overall Percentage of Search Traffic**
- **Percentage of Mobile Traffic**
- **Mobile Traffic Time on Site**
- **Social Presence Rank**
- **Search Engine Ranking Placements**
- **Page Load Performance Times**
- **User Behavior Engagement Times**
- **User Page Depth Percentage**
- **Design and Usability**

Although we included one subjective category out of 12, removing that category barely impacts these rankings, which are completely performance based. We feel these 12 metrics accurately portray the overall performance of each site, not only how well each site is search engine optimized, but whether or not consumers are receiving and consuming the content they want. It also uses mobile metrics to appeal to this subsection and how well consumers are using the small screen when visiting each site. With all of these stats, the relative size of the brokerage does not factor into the metrics. We hope you enjoy the ranking for 2013.

2013 OPS Rank	Company
1.	Park Company Realtors, Fargo, ND
2.	Coldwell Banker Rick Canup Realtors, Lubbock, TX
3.	Blanchard and Calhoun, Augusta, GA
4.	RealtyUSA, New York
5.	Ruhl and Ruhl, Quad Cities, Iowa
6.	FC Tucker Emge, Evansville Indiana
7.	Barker Real Estate, Santa Fe, NM
8.	Prudential Homesale Services Group, Harrisburg, PA
9.	Comey and Shepherd Realtors, Cincinnati, OH
10.	Prudential Tropical Realty, Tampa, FL
11.	RE/MAX of Reading, Reading, PA
12.	Intero Real Estate Services, Cupertino, CA
12.	Lang Realty, Boca Raton, FL
14.	Lang McLaughry and Spera, VT & NH
15.	Dilbeck Real Estate, La Canada, CA

Commentary: The 2013 Rankings saw some familiar faces most notably towards the top of the list with the number 1 company repeating for the second year in a row. Several new additions broke onto the scene in 2013 in order of presence we have: Ruhl and Ruhl in the Quad Cities of Iowa, Barker Real Estate in Santa Fe, NM, FC Tucker Emge in Evansville, IN, Lang Realty in Boca Raton, FL and Comey and Shepherd in Cincinnati, OH.

Congratulations to all of these fine companies on their continued success or newfound glory for 2013.

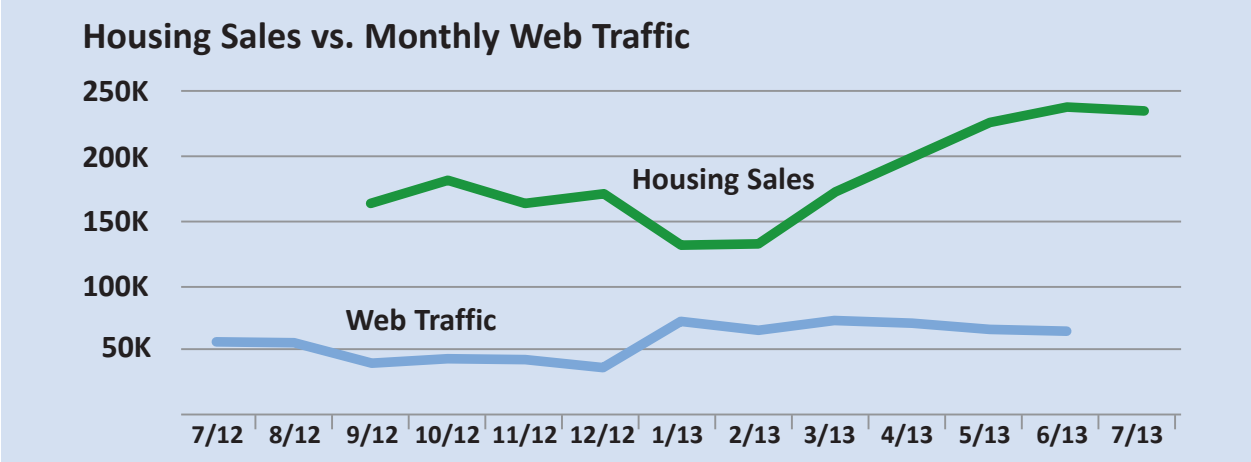
Monthly Website Traffic Correlation with REAL *Trends* Housing Data

In statistics a correlation coefficient is used to determine the relationship between two properties. A correlation of 1.0 is a perfect correlation. A correlation of -1.0 is a perfect negative correlation and 0 would be no correlation.

We have been conducting this same study for 3 years now. The methodology has us overlaying website traffic on top of REAL *Trends* housing market data to find the correlation coefficient. We start with a direct match in which we put, for example, the exact same months of data on top of each other and we, for three years now, have found virtually no correlation. Stating what is happening on your website this month doesn't mean you are closing more or less business based on increased or decreased website traffic in the same month. So we shift it one month and in this scenario we start to see a shift in the positive correlation direction but nothing of significance; it would be considered a weak correlation. In 2011 we had a near perfect correlation at the 3 month mark. Stating website traffic is a very strong indicator in relation to closed housing transactions 3 months later. In 2012 we saw that near perfect correlation shift to 2 months. Below is the excerpt from the 2012 Study.

For the 2012 Online Performance Study, we had enough data to go back to 2011 and half of 2012. We were surprised by the results from the analysis. To start with, we got very similar results when directly overlapping same month traffic with housing sales with virtually no correlation. The one-month delay jumped to a moderately small correlation of .74. Then REAL *Trends* discovered a near perfect correlation between housing sales data and website traffic from 2 months prior with a correlation coefficient of .94, even more significant than the last study. What happened next was even more surprising as the last study showed a tapering effect of sales 4-5 months down the road, the new study found a drastic drop off of correlation in this sample data. Essentially explaining consumers are now pulling the trigger much quicker than just 8 months ago.

We feel there are reasonable explanations for this discovery. First, as interest rates continue to decline and speculation in that area increases, consumers who are likely to purchase are pulling the trigger much quicker. Secondly, as inventory levels decline the consumers on the fence are jumping at the first opportunity, more so than in past years.



In 2013 the data has seemed to combine 2011 and 2012 in one. A correlation coefficient of .8 or greater is considered a very strong correlation. This year we had both the 2 month and 3 month overlaps come in with a very strong correlation coefficient. The evidence states the consumer buying window from when they first started searching on brokerage websites has actually lengthened. Many factors can lead to this including inventory, financial factors, legislation and more. In Layman's terms the new age consumer in this period is closing fast (2 months) or due to financial road blocks or inventory hurdles it's taking nearly 3-4 months to find the home of their liking.

Glossary and Tech Terminology

API: Application Program Interface – A technology available to allow you to tie two systems together. Commonly seen in CRM's when an outside technology will feed leads into your existing CRM.

Bounce Rate: A bounce occurs when a website visitor only views a single page on a website, that is the visitor leaves a site without visiting any other pages before a specified session-timeout occurs. There is no industry standard minimum or maximum time by which a visitor must leave in order for a bounce to occur. Rather, this is determined by the session timeout of the analytics tracking software.

Conversions: A term used within the constraints of Google Analytics. Conversions allow you to track how often a certain event or goal happens. There are a few types of conversions but the one most often used in real estate is the URL Destination Conversion. Typically when a consumer fills out a contact form the end result is a page that refreshes and displays a new URL. That URL is what is tracked in Google Analytics. Once you establish this goal you will then be able to see how or what people did prior to completing that goal. For example, you had 30 people from Facebook yesterday fill out your contact us form or 20 people came from Google via the keywords Real Estate in Denver, Co and inquired on listings. This is the type of detail you can get and use the data to enhance your site further.

To set these up login to your Google Analytics and click on the admin tab. You will see another tab for goals. Add a new goal (name it) and if you know the monetary value (or close rate) of the number of contacts you get enter in what each action is worth to you to track ROI. Go fill out your form and copy the URL and paste that in the field. Keep exact match selected. Or if you want to track variations of a link like on some listing contact forms then exact match is not used, rather a head or expression match is used to pick out a piece of the URL you are tracking. Click save and you are done. Happy Tracking.

CRM: Customer Relationship Management System- One of the most commonly known systems is salesforce.com but many exist in real estate.

e-Team: A collection of agents who handle leads within a brokerage. The classification for an e-Team is a subset of agents with special requirements that receive general brokerage leads. Typically if a brokerage doesn't distribute leads evenly amongst all agents they essentially have an e-Team.

GDN: Google Display Network – A vast network of websites like Gmail and many news outlets that combined make up a huge advertising opportunity via Google. Remarketing uses this network to display an ad to someone who has already been on your website but left.

Mobile Website vs Mobile App: The great debate… A mobile website is one which you access through your mobile browser like Safari. You can usually add that icon to your home screen or dock on your phone but that does not mean it's a mobile app. A mobile app is downloaded from the Apple App Store, Google Play Store (Android), Amazon App Store and of course Windows and Blackberry have their own version.

Organic Search Traffic: This is associated with search engines such as Google. The organic aspect refers to the unpaid areas that are displayed and clicked on in search results. This term is commonly associated wit

search engine optimization. Which is the process of improving the visibility of a website or a web page in search engines via the "natural" or un-paid ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results. In general, the earlier (or higher ranked on the search results page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine's users. SEO may target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, video search, academic search, news search and industry-specific vertical search engines.

Paid Search Traffic: AKA Search engine marketing, (SEM), is a form of Internet marketing that seeks to promote websites by increasing their visibility in search engine result pages (SERPs) through the use of paid placement, contextual advertising, and paid inclusion. Search engine optimization (SEO) "optimizes" website content to achieve a higher ranking in search results, for example, by incorporating specific keywords or links associated with the website. Depending on the context, SEM can be an umbrella term for various means of marketing a website including SEO, or it may contrast with SEO, focusing on just paid components. Often identified by a shaded yellow or gray background on the search engines.

Pageviews: The total number of pages viewed on a website. If a visitor views a site one time and clicks to 6 pages that would be 6 pageviews.

Referring Sources: Any website not acting as a search engine that refers you traffic, i.e., Zillow, REALTOR.com®, Facebook, media sites, etc.

Unique Visitor: According to IFABC Global Web Standards, a unique user (UU) is "an IP address plus a further identifier. The term 'unique visitor' may be used instead of 'unique user' but both terms have essentially the same meaning (see below). Sites may use User Agent, Cookie and/or Registration ID." Note that where users are not allocated IP addresses dynamically (for example by dial-up Internet service providers), this definition may overstate or understate the real number of individual users concerned.

'Unique users' is a common measurement of the popularity of a website, often quoted to potential advertisers or investors, and measured over a standard period of time, typically a month. However, Greg Harmon of Belden Research says "may overstate" is a gross understatement. Remember, it's just an identifier of a computer, not a person. And usually, the computer is identified by a "cookie" which is most often specific to an individual browser on that computer.

Visitor: The total number of visits to a website counting repeat traffic. If someone visits a website several times in 10 minutes or less its only one visitor but if he comes back 5 times in 5 days that would be 5 additional visitors.