



Mark Sampson

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3 Levels of Online Lead Generation

by Scott Pierce

If at first you don't succeed, try-try again!

I. the Listing - the smallest level, but the most powerful

Since 93% of online consumers are searching for properties online, your listing is the first point of contact most people will have with you throughout the Internet.

What can you do to maximize the effectiveness of your listing to generate leads for you; basic advertising and marketing principals that unfortunately most agents do not practice?

Take Great Pictures!

If you can, even for the most (and perhaps especially for the most) hum drum properties, get professional pictures taken. Great professional pictures of your listing will not only attract more buyers, but also put you ahead of most other agents in your next listing presentation.

To start, you should have 6 pictures that show off the house to prospective buyers in under a minute and these should include:

1. The front of the house (try to skip the double garage doors!)
2. The Living Room or Area
3. The Kitchen (2 shots of the kitchen focusing on different aspects from different angles if possible)
4. The master bedroom
5. The master bathroom (put the toilet seat down!)
6. The backyard or area

These six plus pictures will give buyers a great overview of your listing without giving it all away. Remember, the point of advertising and marketing is to get people to contact you for more information. Not overload them with so much information that they decide that they have seen enough and do not need to call you for more information.

If you cannot afford to get professional pictures taken, get/beg/borrow a nice point and click camera and learn how to use it and learn how to take great photographs with it. If there is an agent in your office that takes great photographs, ask to go out with them the next time they are taking pictures of a new listing and watch what they do and ask questions.

HINT: Keeping in mind the orientation of the home, take pictures during the time of day when the most light is coming in and always turn on all the lights in the room you are shooting and the rooms adjoining it for the best pictures. If you have more pictures, put these on your website for people to see when they click to it for more information, not in your online marketing.

Write a Great Description!

People can write 1,000 words about the head of a pin, and you are being paid 2.5+% to market and sell the listing....take the time to write out a great property description, but do not make so long that it becomes part of the disclosures. 2-3 sentences describing each of the above listed 6 areas should be about perfect.

II. The Ad - The best opportunity to capture leads

People can see your listing all over the internet...as an eFlyer, on Craigslist, on a blog and on other websites.

Your listing online is like an open house....100 people may see it, but only 1-2 are going to be interested enough in it to contact you. Another 30-40 are lookylou's and the remaining 58-69 are interested in real estate...but you have no idea how much or anything else about them.

Create a Conversation

While trying to strike the balance of keeping your ad focused, attractive and informative...be sure to create opportunities for allowing people to converse

with you regarding what it is that interests them or about what their needs are concerning real estate.

Property Searches

Since 93% of people are searching listings, providing specific property searches in your area is a great way to start conversations. For someone looking at homes in Noe Valley San Francisco a link stating "Search Homes for Sale in Noe Valley" would be something that a lot of people looking at your listing in Noe Valley would be interested in.

For More Information

The Purchase Process - "How to Write and Negotiate the Best Offer in Today's Market."

People spend more time doing research online than ever before! Be their go to person for 'how it is really done' vs. making them read the same old information that they see on every other website.

HINT: Create a link as shown above in your online ads that take people to a summary of the information and then have them email you for the full report. This is called value transference....and lead generation. You are providing the person something of value and in return you get something of value.

III. A. The Lead Generation Website - The best opportunity, linked to from the Listing Ad

Lead generation websites focus on one part of the buying or selling process and give a bit of information with a promise of more information for the consumers information!

A Lead Generation website is usually only a couple of pages long at most and typically generate more leads than your website when used properly.

III. B. The Website - Your Catch-All

Hopefully your website domain is a combination of major key words for your area and you have a good selection of specific property searches for people to view, along with numerous types of information that are properly presented in

summary with easy ways for people to access more of it if they choose. This way, once someone is on your website they will want to spend time clicking around and not see the same canned information that exists on everyone else's website.

Nothing says "I do not care about you" more than canned content, canned reports and a canned website.

If your website is canned...start deconstructing it in small steps...one page at a time starting with your homepage and working your way through.

Key Points:

1. On the homepage, lose the picture of yourself and replace with multiple links to property searches in your sales area.
2. Every page should have a summary with a way to get more information. Lose the 1,000 word canned information and replace with a paragraph or two summary with a short form or email to request more information.
3. ALL content on the website should be original content written by you. You are a professional right? You've done all of this a few times and you know how to write and spell?
4. Do not worry about writing for SEO or anything else your first time through. Just focus in being succinct, to the point and reread to make sure that it makes sense.

Now make sure that your attractively photographed listing with its great write-up is put as many places as possible on the Internet with multiple links back to your website creating numerous conversations and opportunities to create relationships and transfer value.

Do this and not only will you get more buyers to work with, but you will create raving fans, sell more houses and have more fun in the process.

Scott Pierce is the founder and head trainer of Listings-to-Leads, a leading provider of lead generation tools for real estate brokers and agents on Craigslist, Facebook, Twitter, blogs, SEO and other online marketing products. Scott Pierce was formerly the Director of Online Marketing at a leading Sotheby's International Realty affiliate. Listings-to-Leads generate more leads for brokers and agents using their listings, the number one searched item by online consumers.