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5 social media practices that pay off

Trends from Real Estate Connect San Francisco conference

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What are the trends that will influence your real estate business now and throughout the next few years? What does it take to succeed in today's fast-paced real estate environment? If you want to stay ahead of the curve and dominate your competitors, here are some of the latest cutting-edge ideas from this year's [Real Estate Connect](#) in San Francisco.

1. Engage or die

It's no longer sufficient to have a profile page on Facebook or LinkedIn. Sharing information has given way to engaging in meaningful conversations with your friends and followers. As one Connect speaker put it, "The '@' sign is the universal sign of engagement."

To make sure you maximize your return from social media, begin by spending the first two weeks just listening to what others are saying on their social media pages. This means that you must go where your potential clients go rather than expecting them to come to you. Next, notice what captures their attention and what is ignored. At that point, you are ready to begin engaging by commenting on what others say.

2. Geo-target your responses

Today's consumers want rich information about the neighborhood and the lifestyle where they will live. In fact, The Corcoran Group, winner of an Inman News Innovator of the Year award for its Foursquare app, experienced an increase in response rates of eight to 10 times when it began using geotargeted marketing.

To take advantage of this trend in your business, review your closed transactions for the last 12 months to determine which areas are your top two generators of closed transactions. These two areas are a great place to focus your geo-targeting efforts since you are already having success there.

To begin this process, a smart move is to set up a Facebook business page, group page or community page devoted to everything about living in that area. According to one marketer, posting three times per week on your geo-targeted site is the sweet spot for generating the greatest response.

If you're puzzled about what to post, interview the owner of the French bakery that just opened around the corner or interview the football coach about the upcoming high school football season. Again, your goal is to share what is great about living in your market area.

3. Ubiquity vs. stationary

Until recently, you had to be sitting at a computer to access the Web. With today's new tablets and high-powered mobile devices, we are no longer stationary. The Web is ubiquitous and can be accessed virtually anywhere. Consumers are almost as likely to see your website on their smartphone or their iPad as they are on their PC.

In fact, approximately 17 percent of all agents have already made the move to mobile. Mobile apps let you take your office anywhere where you have a mobile phone or a Wi-Fi connection.

As a result, old-fashioned static websites are declining in importance and being replaced by mobile apps and widgets. This means that you must start thinking about how your website will look on a mobile device.

Younger clients are skimmers and scanners -- they don't read much when they are surfing the Web. You can address this issue by either setting up a separate site for mobile with no more than four buttons or you can optimize your current site so it functions both in a traditional Web browser as well as for mobile.

Three commonly used apps that simplify this process include DocuSign for mobile signatures and documents, Dropbox for file sharing on multiple devices, and Evernote for recording your notes in writing and/or audio. The shift is from thinking PC to thinking mobile device. Because the mobile consumer is always on the go, maps are also critical.

As one speaker summed it up, "Refusing to use your mobile is passive aggression."

4. The death of YouTube

What could trigger the demise of YouTube? A self-hosted site using Amazon's S3 allows you to post your videos where you receive the benefits of the traffic to your website or blog rather than YouTube. The trend is to build your search engine ranking rather than YouTube's ranking.

5. Monitor results

A major issue for agents and brokerages alike continues to be failure to monitor the results from their online activities. For example, you can track clicks on Twitter with HootSuite. To track responses on your website, you can use sites such as Google Analytics or GetClicky.com. To track responses to blog posts, you can use URL shorteners such as Bit.ly or BudUrl.com to monitor how many people open your blog posts.

Social media tools allow you to unleash your marketing program. Instead of marketing to one person as you do with print marketing and email, you can market from one to many with a single social media post. Furthermore, emails seldom go viral, whereas social media posts often do. If you haven't jumped on the social media bandwagon, there's no better time than right now.

Bernice Ross, CEO of RealEstateCoach.com, is a national speaker, trainer and author of the National Association of Realtors' No. 1 best-seller, "Real Estate Dough: Your Recipe for Real Estate Success." Hear Bernice's five-minute daily real estate show, just named "new and notable" by iTunes, at www.RealEstateCoachRadio.com. You can contact her at Bernice@RealEstateCoach.com or [@BRoss](https://twitter.com/BRoss) on Twitter.