The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (NAR) constantly communicates to consumers and the media the importance of choosing to work with an agent who has the REALTOR® credential because of your unparalleled expertise, access to NAR’s many resources and commitment to the Code of Ethics.

Every day, you do your part to promote yourself as a REALTOR®. And every day, your national association is doing the same.

Because of NAR’s outreach — and your efforts — home buyers and sellers know there’s a difference between a REALTOR® and someone who hasn’t earned the right to carry that name. They recognize you as a trusted professional, respected within the industry and your community. As a result, when it comes time to buy and sell real estate, consumers turn to you.

Your online presence and the effective use of social media can be key to your success in the real estate business. This guide has two purposes - to help you take your business to a new level through the use of eMarketing and to put into context your responsibilities and duties as a Member of NAR when using social media. Strategic use of social media will enhance your reputation for quality and standards of excellence in all real estate-related pursuits.

Use this guide to not only build your knowledge, but to create your own eMarketing plan. Make notes to help you implement and put into practice what you learn along the way! Don’t let this guide be another book on the shelf — choose one thing at a time, then return and implement another.

→ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – Watch for these tips for suggestions of ways to execute an action step.
The Internet has made it perfectly reasonable to sell a home to a buyer you’ve never met. The Internet has also increased the expectation among consumers that your business will have a credible online presence. Prospects you’ve never encountered are forming opinions about you and your business at the click of a mouse.

Internet first impressions are not just influenced by how your website looks, but also by how often your business appears in searches on key words and your presence on the more popular real estate sites. Once they find you, is their real estate search aided by your content? Do you write or present material in a way that makes sense to them? Can they relate to you online? Connecting with the people in your area and the community itself is key.

Establishing relationships with people and sharing knowledge and information about the area and real estate market will prove your expertise, critical to today’s consumers. They want to feel they know a bit about you — through what you have shared with them (not at them) . . . this builds trust and confidence.

According to the 2010 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, 89% of all buyers used the Internet when searching for a home to purchase; 85% of these buyers purchased the homes they find with a real estate agent, stressing the importance of the agent in the buying and search process. They find blogs, real estate search websites, and forums through these searches. As clients read, explore, and research, they find an agent’s listings, bio and posts. They start feeling like they know that agent before they even meet him/her in person. The relationship building begins online, with their first impression of you.

One of the common objections to creating an online presence is budget. Many people think that they just don’t have the time and/or excess budget to establish an online presence. You don’t require a large budget and/or outlay of time to effectively begin an eMarketing campaign.
WHAT IS EMARKETING AND WHAT CAN IT DO FOR YOU?

EMarketing is “Internet marketing.” You may see it called i-marketing, Web-marketing, online-marketing or eMarketing. It is the marketing of products or services over the Internet.

The Internet has brought media to a global audience. The interactive nature of eMarketing in terms of providing instant responses and eliciting feedback are the unique qualities of the medium. Internet marketing is sometimes considered to be broad in scope because it not only refers to marketing on the Internet, but also includes marketing done via e-mail and wireless media. Internet marketing ties together creative and technical aspects of the Internet, including design, development, advertising, and sales.

Internet marketing also refers to the placement of media along many different stages of the customer engagement cycle through search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), banner ads on specific websites, e-mail marketing, and Web 2.0 strategies.

This guide will help you understand these items and the way business has shifted with the Internet age, helping you market your business in the ever-changing virtual world. Our goal is to have REALTORS® learn best practices for increasing traffic to their websites by making their sites the hub of their online marketing efforts. We will review all the online tools available to help communicate with today’s online consumer.

eMARKETING CAN HELP YOU:

- Establish a powerful online reputation, brand and presence.
- Engage in search engine marketing (SEM), search engine optimization (SEO), banner advertising on specific websites, e-mail marketing, mobile marketing and Web 2.0 strategies.
- Create, build, and develop relationships with potential clients through social media and deep content.
- Use analytics to evaluate and determine the most valuable activity online with frequent assessment to plan future activity.
- Be present and available where your target consumers are spending time online.

“He who fails to plan, plans to fail” ~Proverb

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EMarketing
ADVANTAGES OF EMARKETING

ONLINE MARKETING HAS MANY BENEFITS. IT CAN BE:

• **Highly Targeted** - The ability to add specific and customized items to your online marketing content allows you to attract highly targeted customers to your website. It offers easily measurable knowledge of how many people are visiting your website, how they found you and what they looked at while on your site is invaluable information for a better understanding of your customers. This provides you the ability to supply what they require. eMarketing allows you to obtain full tracking figures through your website analytics tools and gives you the ability to track the return on investment for the marketing you do. Better tracking ensures better investment of marketing time, energy, and dollars.

• **Immediate** - Time is crucial in business. An eMarketing campaign is easy to set up and implement and allows consumers to immediately respond to the campaign, allowing you to see results in real time.

• **Cost effective** - Noting tight budgets, many eMarketing tools are inexpensive or even free.

• **Viral** - If people enjoy the content and experience on your website, they will become an advocate for you, this leads to referral business — people trust friends, family. NAR’s 2010 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers estimates 44% of people use a REALTOR® based on a referral. Many features of an eMarketing campaign are easily shareable and allow for consumers to market your business themselves.

In order to determine what type of eMarketing strategy is best for you, you need to evaluate the effectiveness of your existing marketing strategies. By using analytic tools, which we’ll discuss later, you can determine which elements of your marketing strategy do not work and replace them with some new online marketing tools. If this is done a little at a time, you can monitor the changes you make and see if they are making a difference in your marketing. Offline marketing and online marketing strategies together can result in even higher returns on your marketing investments.

You’ll find a number of tips and topics have a video icon with them. You can find out more by watching a short video on the topic by going to [http://www.socialmediamarketinginstitute.com/NAR](http://www.socialmediamarketinginstitute.com/NAR).
BUDGET AND TIME—CREATING AN ONLINE PRESENCE

As we’ve said, one of the common objections to creating an online presence is budget. Many people think that they just don’t have the time and/or excess budget to establish an online presence. You don’t require a large budget and/or outlay of time to effectively begin an eMarketing campaign.

You will need to include the time you spend on your online presence as part of your investment. The financial budget has many variables. If you are comfortable with the computer, you can create a website and social networking network for next to nothing. That’s right, zero dollars. On the other hand, you can opt to spend thousands of dollars on a customized website. It’s all up to you, your budget, availability, and your needs.

In the list below this paragraph, the different elements that make up an eMarketing strategy are broken down, one by one, providing a rule of thumb for the budget and time needed for each item. Some people may choose to spend more time and/or less time and budget on each item as they begin to analyze results associated with their campaigns.

- **Build Your Own Website**
  - Time: 1 to 24 hours
  - Budget: $0 to 100
  - Domain Setup $10/year and 15 minutes to setup

- **Customized Website**
  - Time 1 to 4 hours
  - Budget: $500 to $5,000

- **Build your Own Blog**
  - Time: 1 to design and 1 hour per post
  - Budget: $0 to $100

- **Customized Blog**
  - Time: 1 to design and 1 hour per post
  - Budget: $500-$3000 plus monthly fee

- **Facebook Page**
  - Time: 1-3 hours
  - Budget: $0 to $300
• Set up of Social Networking Sites
  – Time: Ongoing
  – Budget: $0 to $300

• Email Newsletter
  – Time: 2-3 hours monthly
  – Budget: $14 to $150 monthly

• Mobile Marketing
  – Time: 1-3 hours
  – Budget: $10 to $300

• Listing Syndication
  – Time: 1-3 hours monthly
  – Budget: $0 to $30 monthly

• Single Listing Websites
  – Time: 1-3 hours monthly
  – Budget: $10-$150 monthly

Consider your overall marketing budget and determine if some of the dollars you spend on print advertising should be redirected to eMarketing.

_A year ago social media was an afterthought. As real estate firms forge into 2011, social media is fully integrated into marketing plans, with a reliance and focus on it._
As clients continue to increase their use of the Internet in real estate, the Web presence of REALTORS® becomes even more important. According to the 2010 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® Member Profile, nearly two-thirds of all REALTORS® reported having a website. Among those that did not have a website, 10% planned to have one in the future. The majority of REALTORS® have had a website for five years.

Among residential brokerage specialists with websites, more than 68% had information about their own property listings, home buying and selling, and mortgage or financial calculators on their sites. On commercial brokerage specialists’ websites, more than half had their own property listings, a link to the firm’s website, and information about home buying and selling.

The use of blogs has steadily increased as a marketing tool for real estate agents. One in ten Members reported having a real estate blog. In 2010, 10% of Members reported having a blog. Among REALTORS®, blogs are most common among those aged 29 and under, and nearly one in five Members in this age group have a blog.

Social media is changing the way that all companies market and real estate is no exception. Use of social media has increased sharply from 2009. More than half of Members are using social media and an additional 12% plan to in the future. In 2009, only 35% of REALTORS® used social networking websites already, and 14% planned to do so in the future. The use of social networking sites is more common among younger age groups, although a substantial, one-third, of Members over the age of 60 use these sites.

In addition, according to the 2010 REALTORS® Technology Survey, REALTORS®’ comfort with social media is evolving. The 2008 study reported that 67% of respondents did not use social media. This year, the study shows that 84% are using social media, though only 19% of agents and brokers are extremely comfortable with it. NAR is one of the top sources for REALTORS® to learn about technology for real estate. Eighty percent of respondents are looking to communicate with prospective, existing or past clients through the use of social media. Find out more survey results at [www.Realtor.org/CRT](http://www.Realtor.org/CRT).
The referrals generated by your “social network” of family, friends and people you know are strategically vital to your business. But this does not mean you can’t place some separation between your business friends or prospects and your purely personal social network. An example of how this separation is starting to be noticeable is with Facebook, which in November of 2010 made a firm distinction between business pages and personal profiles.

REALTOR.com® built a “See My Listings” application that made it possible for Facebook friends to view a REALTORS® listings on their personal profile page. To comply with the new Facebook display rules, REALTOR.com® moved this application and its functionality to compliant business pages, enabling REALTORS® to keep their business display removed from day to day personal postings, but still within the REALTORS® social network.

If you have not done so already, you can get instructions and the application to build a Facebook business page from REALTOR.com® on their REALTOR® MARKETER Facebook page: www.facebook.com/realestatemarketer.

NAR has developed a template for its Members with the purpose of providing brokers with a starting point that may be used when developing a social media policy for the broker’s own firm. The template is on www.Realtor.org and is called Use of Social Media in the Real Estate Business. The document lays out what brokers and agents can and cannot do online, including on blogs and other social media sites. You can find the full policy at: http://www.realtor.org/letterlw.nsf/pages/0510rm_socialmedia.

The template suggests the scope of the broker’s policy should extend to all uses of social media in connection with the real estate business (includes any use in which the agent seeks to promote or capture real estate business from consumers or other agents). The broker’s policy is not intended to cover the activities of agents falling completely outside the real estate business. Any conduct however, which reflects adversely upon broker or the brokerage may be reviewed under the terms of this policy. Confirm that your broker has a social media usage policy. If your broker doesn’t have a policy, you may want to review the template for ideas applicable to your blog/website. For example, the template suggests a standard for what identifying information about the agent or brokerage to include on the blog/website. The template finds its basis in both the Code of Ethics and the Rules and Regulations of many real estate commissions.
Having your website as the hub for all your marketing is your best strategy. Your website is the focal point for all of your marketing campaigns where you direct all of your Internet traffic. You should have searches, community and real estate information and most importantly, ways for the consumer to get in touch with you when they are ready to buy or sell on your site. This is where you establish your reputation and begin to build relationships as consumers learn to appreciate you.

Your hub can be a traditional website or other type of Web page. You will have many different marketing tools or spokes, spokes are the items that will drive traffic to your site and your listings. Spokes will always point back to your hub. Let’s look at some different examples people can use for their hubs:

**STATIC WEBSITE**

A static website is a website with various pages of content that don’t need updating. Some will include extra widgets that will update content – like a Home Search widget that pulls information from another site/source to display your featured listings. Many agents will use a template website that has similar content provided to all agents. For example, an office may have websites for their agents that contain the same community, transaction, and company information on all pages. It’s important to provide information unique to you/your target audience so you aren’t diluted as search engines provide the “same ‘ole information” out there with a hundred other people. Try to customize and personalize any additional pages you have available.

› **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Make sure to include your website in your email signature, and on all your print materials.
BLOG WEBSITE

A blog website is considered a website that gets frequently updated with content. A blog is a useful hub because it’s easy to personalize, easy to change, and very flexible. Many blogging platforms have added features enabling them to have the journaling function of a blog combined with a more traditional website with multiple pages, the ability to add video, photos, documents and real estate listing information. A blog can be about any subject. Many agents will focus their blog on real estate and the community in which they work. The schedule of updates varies with each blog, but the benefit is in the articles. Establish yourself as an area, neighborhood, town, specialty home, lakefront property expert within your blog.

REALTOR.com® offers a free Featured Blog Tool for REALTORS® to help demonstrate their local expertise and connect with potential customers. Members can use this tool to create their own blog without having to worry about design and/or platform. Whether used as a stand-alone site or dropped into your own website, the Featured Blog is a Member benefit that can help expose your brand and expertise to the millions of REALTOR.com® visitors if your content is selected for publication on the REALTORS® Blogs. REALTOR.com® is the #1 homes for sale site.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – There are many different topics you can write about. You’ll find your own writing voice by practicing. Some successful bloggers write how they speak. The goal of any blog is to get to know a person.

FACEBOOK PAGE

A Facebook Page is a type of blog because it’s updated with regular entries as part of the news feed feature. Facebook Pages are differentiated from the personal profiles because they are dedicated to a group or business rather than someone’s personal space.

Some agents will choose to use a Facebook page as their hub, although it lacks customization, search engine prominence and analytic tracking. If you choose, however, to use a Facebook Page for your central spot, be sure and have your contact information prominently displayed.
“BUSINESS CARD” SITE

A one-site online business card allows you to summarize all of your social media and marketing activities into one easy-to-find hub. The One-Site Online Business Card is a website listing all of the various networks to which you belong to and how to find you on them. This can also host your phone numbers and point to other websites you have. They are an aggregator for all of the places where you can be found on the Web. Google offers a free profile. You can set one up at www.google.com/profiles.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – REALTOR.com® recently updated their “Find a REALTOR®” directory to provide all Members and offices with a new profile page that can include a bio, photo/logo, defined market area, and social networking links to Facebook and Twitter. With 57% of consumers choosing a REALTOR® because they have used them in the past or they were referred by a friend or someone in a social network, this new Member benefit from REALTOR.com® can help generate more referrals by ensuring that when you are recommended you can easily be found and contacted. REALTOR.com® recently reported a tenfold increase in searches for REALTORS® on the redesigned “Find a REALTOR®” profile pages. Claim and update your profile today. For more info: http://marketing.realtor.com/cmp/redux/3/

Source: 2010 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers
TAP INTO THE POWER OF YOUR WEBSITE

Regardless of the type of hub you choose, be sure you have one … this is the central spot you will use as your home base to send traffic. Here is where you’ll focus the information your readers want, and focus the effort to have people contact you for their real estate transaction. An ideal hub will offer the features of a static website with the key dynamic content and information of a blog site. Combining these two types of media will allow you to get the most bang for your buck.

HERE ARE SOME KEY ELEMENTS A SUCCESSFUL HUB WILL HAVE:

- **BIO/Resume** - Make it short and personal. Don’t just bullet list your education and designations – explain them with a sentence or two. Make it friendly. Make it personal.

- **Areas of specialization** - What are the areas you specialize in? If you specialize in certain properties/transactions – explain. Perhaps even include a map of the area you serve.

- **Contact Information** - Make it easy for the consumer to find how to reach you. Be sure to have your contact information on every page. In various methods (phone, email, Social networks, etc.). Don’t forget your brokerage information according to the Code of Ethics and your office policy.

- **Custom Content** - Add some pages of information for your area: community and real estate related. Maybe a directory of affiliates or local businesses. Write about the Offer to Purchase contract or the short sale process. Stand apart from other sites. Be different.

- **Home Search** - This is the number one thing a Buyer wants to find on your site. You can opt for anything from a free to a costly version of an IDX “Internet Data Exchange” search site. Remember, consumers will find what they are looking for from someone online – will it be you? An IDX site may require registration before using it but it might help in your search to find the right one for you. Only someone operating a VOW site must have client registration.

- **Home Value** - Sellers often visit a real estate site to get a valuation of their property. Market reports, graphs, and request forms can all help you provide this to a seller.
• **Statistics** - Community Members want to find out what properties have been selling for in their area and neighborhood. If you update your data these visitors will return over and over again — and when they’re ready to make a move they’ll remember you provided the expertise of the market. Provide visuals like charts/ graphs and narrative.

• **Hyper Local Content** - People living in the community will appreciate community information. School districts, government town meetings and newspapers are all good resources for this information. Share this type of information and report on your thoughts. Pictures and videos of the area are also reasons locals will return to your site.

• **Calls to action** - Tell the visitors what you want them to do. Use these calls to action throughout the site:
  – Email for more information
  – Click here to sign up for a free newsletter
  – For the latest market report on your neighborhood – fill out this form
  – Call me at 555-555-5555.

• **Policy** - Establish a policy on your site regarding comments that are allowed/prohibited. If your content is copyrighted and you don’t want it stolen — state that. Make sure it is clear if you are an agent and in what state you hold a real estate license.

• **Share, Like, Link** - People want to join you in being the expert. Make sure your site has ways for people to “share” your link, “like” your article, and “like” what you’ve said. Customizable sites will allow for plug ins to be added. Adding a comments section allows you to receive feedback on content.

Expert Bobby Carroll of Dakno Marketing shares, “Whatever you choose, there are some basic best practices that you should consider when implementing real estate website design. Site visitors could care less if the portal they are on is called a blog or a website. It’s all about having easy access to information and tools to help in their home buying (and selling) endeavors. Make sure the real estate website offers the site visitor the structure for hyper-local area, neighborhood and condo building information, testimonials, staff pages, buyer articles, seller articles, calculators, and engagement opportunities with highly customizable forms.”

➤ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Take a close look at your website from a consumer’s perspective. Does it work? Visit your local coffee shop and offer to buy a cup of coffee in exchange for ten minutes of time. Have your laptop ready and let them explore your site — tell them you want to hear what they think — most importantly the negative critique.
UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL MEDIA CONCEPTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The Web 2.0 platform facilitates conversations, relationship building and trust. When you begin to think about sharing your links on sites/social media platforms, remember to focus on the relationship building. If you constantly send out market reports, but don’t talk and engage with the people in the area, you will be talking to a brick wall. Ensure that when you are online you are engaging with your audience. Don’t be a spammer – don’t try to “sell” people or talk real estate all the time; you’ll be tuned out immediately. Remember to use every communication you have with someone as an opportunity to market yourself and your business, and try to do so in an inviting way.

When you begin to get involved in the various social media sites don’t sell yourself and your business before you know that person. Remember these people want the relationship building more. They want to have something in common with you; finding this commonality can be easy. It could be as simple as you both live in MYCITY. It might be that you both have a dog. You may both patronize the local ice cream shop. Build on the things you have in common just as you would in the offline world.

The very best thing to occur within online networking circles is when someone else shares a link to one of your posts. It is considered very bad form if you shout out your links to posts you’ve written and aren’t trying to engage people in this space. People using online platforms to talk AT people are missing a big piece of networking. It is important to always ask for feedback and remember to include a call to action with anything you do; this will invite people to get involved in what you’re writing about or marketing.

After you have listened, begin to join in the conversation. Concentrate your efforts on building your social media networks with the people in your service area. Eventually they (or someone they know) will be buying or selling their home. The more local people you add to your network, the greater possibility the real estate leads will come to you. As you begin to venture into conversation it’s perfectly acceptable to eavesdrop. If one of your connections has made a comment about something on their Facebook wall, it’s fine for you to leave them a comment and join the discussion.
When you are posting updates/links on various sites, try to follow the formula below. It’s more important to talk with others than to constantly post your links out there. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- 20% linking your content
- 20% linking to other people’s content (A local sports’ team, restaurant, school district, government office, local blogger, reciprocal linking, etc.)
- 20% other business talk
- 40% engage. Talk personally and network. Ask how their animals/kids are! People love it online as much as they do offline.

You can find out more about how to maximize usage of these social media resources by purchasing a copy of *Social Media for REALTORS®: 101 Dos and Don’ts* available at a greatly discounted Member price at www.Realtor.org/Store.
Once your hub is established, you can start creating your spokes; spokes are the items that will drive traffic to your site and your listings. The spokes are the marketing tools you use to drive traffic and touch the consumer; they are the keys to a successful eMarketing campaign. There are a number of options for both offline and online marketing tools to use as spokes to your website. The best ones are ones that you’ll actually use. Here is a brief list of some of the most common tools used. Note some are online and some offline. Spokes can look like many different things. Here are the primary spokes you’ll use in your marketing:

- Blogs
- Social Networks
- Listing Marketing
- Mobile Media
- Online Marketing Tools
- Offline Marketing
BLOGS

Blogs can be used as both the hub for your business or as a great spoke to bring consumers to your site. Blogs offer near real time information and a fresh, relevant experience to today’s consumer. The content on blogs is dynamic content, constantly updated. As it turns out, search engines favor websites with frequently updated pages, which is the nature of a blog. Search engines have increased the frequency of indexing the most active websites. If you have a lot of active content, you can imagine the positive impact this has on the visibility of you and your company when a client searches for content you are posting. People use online search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc. every single day. When you are smart with how you write and update your content, your SEO, aka Search Engine Optimization, will help your website/blog appear as a result of their searches. There are a few different blog options available:

- **Real Estate Blogs** – A website with content frequently updated and focused on real estate subjects of interest. This will allow you to position yourself as an expert in the real estate arena.

  ➔ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Consider a monthly post from an industry expert, a mortgage broker, a stager, an attorney.

- **Community Blogs** – A website focused on the community events, location, and area with content updated on a regular basis.

  ➔ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Create a category for each town in your market or each condominium building you sell. Every time you post an article or a photo about the town or condo, make sure it gets categorized under that town.

- **Photo/Video Blogs** – Using either photos or video, regular blog posts are photos with a small amount of text or a video post of relevant content to your site.

  ➔ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Try using the video on your smartphone to create video blog posts about your community.
As a Member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® you can participate in blogs like the ASK A REALTOR® blog from REALTOR.com®. REALTORS® are invited to participate in Ask a REALTOR® on the REALTOR.com® Blogs. Ask a REALTOR® experts have the opportunity to respond to consumer questions that you hear every day. Answers are published on the REALTOR.com® Blogs and serve to increase awareness of your expertise and also enhance your personal brand. Sign-up by sending your email request to: askarealtor@realtor.com

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – If you’re interesting in learning more about how and why to blog you can do so by purchasing Social Media for REALTORS®: Blogging available at a greatly discounted Member price at www.Realtor.org/Store.

SOCIAL NETWORKS

A social network focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others.

Most social network services provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as posting updates, sending messages to others on their profiles, or through e-mail and instant messaging services. In any social network, your impact is directly related to the quality of your content. The result of your influence is strengthened by consistency and repetition, so participation in a number of spaces is important, though the quality of the content is crucial. Below you will find the social networks you can use as spokes in your eMarketing campaign.

FACEBOOK

There are two types of pages you can utilize on Facebook, a personal page and/or a business page. Below are the details on both.

Facebook Personal Pages – Facebook can be used to connect with clients (past, present, and future) and nurture a relationship by making conversation or liking posts. You’ll be connecting with friends, family, and acquaintances on your personal page. A personal Facebook page should not be used as your only marketing tool because it is meant to be “personal” and fun. Stand out among your connections — using your Webcam, send a video message for a happy birthday to your local network. If you’re really brave, sing your message. When you connect with people on Facebook they become your “friends”. You will need to know the people you are “friends” with for them to be in your network. Think other people will watch your video? Yes.
PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – Focus on connections with your local database vs. other real estate professionals. Engage in conversation and “like” some updates every day. Import your contact database under the friends section and decide who you want to connect with and create an online relationship.

Facebook Business Pages - A business page can be used to focus on the business side of the client relationship and content. This is the page to post listings, talk shop, and market yourself and your business. Facebook business pages allow you to create a presence for your business and promote it within the Facebook community. Facebook users can opt-in to receive messages on Facebook about your business by “Liking” your business. Facebook business pages can be used to share information and engage in discussion with fans.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – REALTOR.com® offers free member only training and assistance for creating a business page for REALTORS®. Because the functionality of Facebook changes frequently, including the rules and permissible practices, it is best to follow these developments by “liking” the REALTOR® MARKETER Facebook page for REALTORS® at www.facebook.com/realestatemarketer. This is where new improvements and changes will be posted for REALTORS® using REALTOR.com® as Facebook evolves.

TWITTER
Twitter is a microblog that allows you to post messages 140 characters long, in which you “follow” people and you develop “followers”. Every time you post a message, everyone who “follows” you receives it, either on Twitter.com, on their cell phones, or via one of many Twitter reader tools.

Twitter posts can include hyperlinks to blog posts or web pages, which encourage people to engage with you. In addition, people can share (or “retweet”) your Twitter posts expanding their reach. To develop a following, you must start by being a follower. Find people in your community and start reaching out and following them. As on many social networking sites, it is important to engage with people here. You do not need to know someone to follow them or have them follow you.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – If you are new to Twitter, give it a try for two weeks. Connect with no more than 25 active users. Listen, and then join in the conversation. Advanced Twitter user? Organize a Tweet up to meet people in your area face-to-face.

Once you have gotten the hang of Twitter.com and you want to include Twitter in your social endeavors, there are third party software platforms that allow you to monitor keywords and people on Twitter. They also allow you to schedule posts and monitor your influence. When using Twitter as a spoke in your marketing strategy we suggest you use
such a service (most are free) to monitor tweets and stay on top of your Twitter feed. These services can actually connect your different social media presences and make it easier to monitor all of them at once. These are:

- Hootsuite.com
- Seesmic
- Tweetdeck
- Tweetgrid

**LINKEDIN**

LinkedIn is a professional network. Build a network of past colleagues, friends, and industry experts. The Answers section helps you build a reputation as an industry expert by answering questions that others ask. Ask people to write recommendations of your work and endorse you. Consider joining the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® group on LinkedIn to network and share ideas with other REALTORS®. LinkedIn is often referred to as the online business meeting. Your profile contains mostly your business credentials and positions past and present. The network of connections is more controlled — you have to already “know” a person before adding to your network. Here are some tips for putting LinkedIn into practice:

- Choose three connections and write a recommendation for them.
- Consider importing your database into this program and connect with your sphere here.
- You will use your longer biography here. List all of the designations you’ve earned, committees you are on, transactions you’ve worked on and past job experience. Include some personal interests as well.
- When you close a transaction ask your client to post a recommendation of your work. Third party endorsements are always the best kind. Recommendations are welcome on LinkedIn. This is an area that you can actively use for networking and professional referrals.

**FLICKR**

A social networking site based around photographs of professionals and hobbyists. Photographs are posted online and allow for comments and connections. Groups are formed or joined based on interests and/or location.

➡ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** — Find groups based on location in your area — post some photos and comment on other photos from users in your area. (If there isn’t a group for YOURTOWN — create one).
Taking pictures of the community you serve and labeling them correctly will help build you as an expert. Images are often found as a result of a local person searching for information online. They can land right into your Flickr pages — where you’ll have all of your contact information prominently displayed.

**FOURSQUARE**

Foursquare is a location based social network that allows for people to check in to places they frequent. This allows for friendly competition among local people to check in the most times at an establishment. Yelp — A place to leave/read reviews on businesses like restaurants, service places, etc. If you concentrate on checking in and leaving reviews for the business, parks, restaurants, etc. in your area… you are reaching local people. You can see who else has visited the same place and leave/read tips about the establishment. These are local people right at your fingertips — connect with them!

⇒ **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** — Look for your favorite places to visit on Foursquare and Yelp... who else has visited there? Make a new connection. Leave a tip at your favorite spots.

**VIDEO/YOUTUBE**

You Tube is the most popular video-sharing network, and can be used to host videos of you, an interview, or film of an area or listing. Comments can be allowed, which engages interest.

Taking a video and then posting it on YouTube or other video sharing sites can be done in a matter of minutes. Be sure to label the tags (key words that describe the video), map the video location (hopefully in your service area), and title with interest and keywords. This will help your video show up in search engine results.

Videos can show your personality and allow you to market yourself in a unique way. Here are some suggestions of videos that you can create and use on your website, post on video sharing sites and send via email:

- **Welcome Video** - Tell current and potential clients what to expect on your site and invite them to look around.

- **Video of Key Personnel** - We love to look at people! Think about all the star magazines at the local checkout counter. This will introduce the clients to you and your team. Put this video in the “About us” page of your Website.

- **Services you offer** - List any special services or what you may do for your client.
- **Real Estate Topic Based Information** - Put videos together with information for first time buyers, on 1031 exchanges. Testimonials, (new homeowners in front of their home or at the signing table). Community or neighborhoods you service - let them know where the banks are, where the dog park is and what type of theatre and cultural events exist.

Every social network that you participate on has a profile or an “About You” section. First impressions on these sites are important. Make sure your photograph is current and your BIO is full of your personality. Everywhere you have a profile is another opportunity to allow people to get to know you. You are marketing yourself and your business through your participation on a social network. Be sure that you remember that items you post reflect and tie back to your overall marketing strategy.

**LISTING MARKETING**

Real Estate Searches are done through many different Internet portals. Today, many national sites like REALTOR.com®, Trulia, Zillow, and Yahoo Real Estate serve millions of visitors. REALTOR.com® is consistently at the top of that list. As a member of your local MLS you will most likely get syndication through REALTOR.com® as an automatic part of that membership. Syndicating your listings to the most popular consumer sites and giving your listings maximum exposure just makes sense. Always read the Terms of Use notice before agreeing to participate on any site.

Check with your local MLS to find a list of their approved Syndication Providers that work hand in hand with them. Once your listing is entered into the MLS, you choose which real estate online listing sites where you want your listing data to appear. Property data changes in the MLS are automatically updated. If your MLS does not offer either of these services you may consider other syndicating services like RealEstateShows, Postlets and VFlyer (carefully read their agreement). You manually enter a listing once and submit it to the list of real estate search engines these sites subscribe to; when the property data changes you open your account on the syndication site and make the change. If you use Listing Syndication services make sure you update the information if/when it changes. If an active listing is no longer on the market - you cannot continue to list it online as available.

Remember that marketing your properties is even more important than marketing yourself. People will find you through these listings, so make it as easy as possible for them to do this.
PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – Google a listing address you have. If the house doesn’t appear in at least five locations – you need syndication!

SINGLE LISTING WEBSITES

Single listing websites are good ways to market a property online. A single listing website is a domain name specifically for a home for sale. When someone calls for information, send them to the website. When a consumer finds your listing via yard sign many times they want more information. They still may not be ready to call the phone number on the sign. Why not give them access to the information on an information rich site?

When you set up your site, make sure you add all the elements that a consumer would want to see. Remember this is a “destination” website. The importance of information you place on your site cannot be overestimated. Below is a list of the items you’ll want to include (whether on a single listing site or as part of any of your listings) with the percentage of consumers who rated this feature as very useful in the home search process according to the 2010 NAR Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers:

- 85% Photos
- 83% Detailed description
- 61% Virtual tours
- 45% Real estate agent contact information
- 43% Interactive maps
- 40% Neighborhood information

Remember, enhancing listings with these key features is also important for syndicated listings of MLS listings. Use the unique Web address for this website everywhere you market this property. On the Web, and in print, include this address so potential buyers can have immediate access to detailed information about the particulars of this home.

Most of these sites give you a sign rider, and a unique Web address that leads the consumer right to the information on that listing. When someone puts in your Web address, example: 100bostonroad.com it will bring them to the site you created. When the property sells, you can give the domain name to the new buyer. It can be a destination site that they will share with all their friends and family, giving you and your good service another boost to a new potential group of buyers and/or sellers.

These sites can be standalone or attached to your existing website. Either way, a direct Web address can be written down off a sign rider and bring people directly to the information they requested.
PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE — Create a single property site and link up the address everywhere! Track the statistics and see if it benefits you — sellers will love to see a site focused on their home.

Some resources for developing a single listing website include:

- Single Property Sites
  - [http://www.singlepropertysites.com](http://www.singlepropertysites.com)
  - Offers a free basic single listing website
  - Upgrade to a Membership to allow for mobile marketing, syndication, etc.

- My Single Property Websites
  - [http://mysinglepropertywebsites.com](http://mysinglepropertywebsites.com)
  - Prices range from $19 to $29 per site, sign riders and custom domains are extra

- eProperty Sites
  - [http://www.epropertysites.com/e_prices.htm](http://www.epropertysites.com/e_prices.htm)
  - $10 per website

If you choose to market your properties using the single listing website, be certain your full contact information is on the site and offer the client the option to view all of your properties by providing your hub address.

MOBILE MEDIA

MOBILE MARKETING WEBSITES

Mobile marketing websites allow consumers to continue their search online right from their mobile device. By optimizing your site for the mobile experience you’re enhancing communication with consumers and increasing the satisfaction with their search experience. Mobile websites are formatted to fit any phone with Internet access. Agents have the ability to customize their mobile website to further enhance the overall user experience.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE — Test your websites out on your mobile device (and friends’ devices too!); make sure they load and are correct.

There are also other ways to use mobile marketing, including:

- **Single Property Mobile Websites** — prospective buyers can text a Mobile ID (short code) to instantly receive property information, the link to the Single Property Mobile Website and the listing agent’s contact information. This feature can be upgraded as part of a membership with a single site operator, typically with a fee.
• **Text ID** – **SMS** - Using a short code, the consumer can receive and access property information, pictures and the agent’s contact information directly on their cell phone via text message.

• **QR Codes** - A QR Code is a two-dimensional bar code. Using a QR code reader on a smartphone, information is sent directly to the consumer’s phone about the property or company. QR codes are free. Google offers them as well as many other companies.

• **Gateway Apps** - A Gateway Application™ allows you to use the logo of your choice, and allows users to install an entrance to your mobile website as an app. You can leverage the power of having your brand on your user’s mobile phone, without the cost of developing a full iPhone app.

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Make sure to visit [www.realtor.com/mobile](http://www.realtor.com/mobile) to download the REALTOR.com® Mobile Applications. They have a gateway app that can search the four million homes on REALTOR.com®, plus view the listings on an interactive map. Apps are available for iPhone, Android and Windows Phone 7.

A new study called the Rise of Apps Culture, from the Pew Internet Project illustrates just how rapidly consumers are embracing applications on their mobile devices. Of the 82% of U.S. adults who are now active cellphone users, 43% now have apps on their phones, and more than two-thirds of them use those apps regularly. In other words, 24% of the U.S. adult population actively uses apps, the study estimates.²

**PODCASTS**

People like to receive information via many different multimedia methods including; reading text, watching videos, and listening to audio. To engage people with audio you can use podcasts. Podcasts are audio bits of information that you record and distribute. You can have podcasts on your website, hosted on a site, or even distribute via iTunes. You can offer real estate-related updates like local market trends and/or community information in a podcast.

**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE** – Try [www.AudioBoo.com](http://www.AudioBoo.com) and record a clip to post – track your stats to see what is popular so you’ll know what to duplicate and whether or not audio is a feature you’d benefit from adding to your site.

²_The Rise of App Culture 9/14/2010_

INSTANT MESSAGING/CHAT FEATURES

AOL Instant Messenger isn’t the only chat program around anymore. There are many other programs that allow for instant chat. Most accounts are free and you can choose who you want to connect with. Messages are exchanged between users who are signed into the programs in real time. Sort of like a phone conversation, but via typed text instead of voice.

Adding a chat feature to your hub can increase traffic, increase engagement and potentially lead to more closings. The chat feature allows clients to contact you and ask questions about items or listings on your site. You can do this by checking out a service like www.Meebo.com.

If you setup a business page on Facebook you can use Facebook’s chat feature to connect with your “friends” while online. Remember to use these features when you are signed in and available.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – When you have established your buddy lists and a profile with an instant messaging platform — many will allow you to sign in on your mobile device and will have your buddy list at your fingertips. A note of caution: staying signed in can be a large drain on your battery.

TEXT MESSAGING

Consumers consider text messaging a required form of communication. Almost every cell phone has the capability of text messaging. Messages are sent from one person to another when you have a quick message and don’t want to go through email or voice conversation. Cell phone carriers have bulk plans for texting services that are more economical than the pay as you go message programs.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – You can text message your clients or consumers to let them know you have a new listing on your site they might be interested in.

VIDEO CONFERENCING

What about connecting with clients that are not local? Busy schedules can also get in the way of face-to-face conversation, but you can talk via video if you have a Webcam built into your computer or have an external camera. The new iPhones have a popular application called FaceTime that can be used for Video Talks. You can connect via online programs and talk in live time by video. Many services listed in the “Instant Messaging” section have the video option as well as SKYPE or TokBox. If you’d prefer to send a video message to someone without the real time talk back and forth – you can use eyejot.com for a personal message.
RSS FEEDS
RSS stands for “Really Simple Syndication” and is a way to easily share blog entries. RSS feeds can be easily created for your blog. This enables software like newsreaders to download your content (text, images, audio or video) automatically every time you publish. Make sure visitors can subscribe to your blog via email, through a RSS feed or through an email subscription.

Here are some resources for setting up email and RSS subscription services:
- Feed Burner [http://feedburner.google.com](http://feedburner.google.com)
- Feed Blitz [http://www.feedblitz.com](http://www.feedblitz.com)

➤ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE — Review your website and test adding a subscription feature and see how many subscribers you get.
ONLINE MARKETING TOOLS

eNEWSLETTERS

An enewsletter is an eMarketing vehicle that is growing in popularity among agents looking to connect with clients on a consistent basis without forced one on one contact or follow-up.

If you’re worried you don’t have enough online experience to create an effective email newsletter, you have the ability to choose from a range of products. Some are turnkey, so you just pick the campaign, add the clients, and the system does it for you. Some allow you to personalize copy. Some don’t. Review a couple of options and see what works for you. By adding copy you have the ability to add your own personality, knowledge and information so the consumer can get to know you through your newsletter.

Your enewsletter should be set up to go out on a consistent basis. The goal is to have clients who anticipate and read your newsletter every month consistently. Sending your newsletter monthly is a good rule of thumb. Always ask permission before you start sending the email, and ask clients to subscribe to your enewsletter by placing an icon or area on your site dedicated to this medium.

Make sure the newsletter product you choose allows you to:

• Manage subscriptions automatically
• Unsubscribe feature
• Data and analytics to see who is reading your newsletter
• Offers templates to create a professional looking product

Some suggested content includes:

• Quarterly or monthly market updates

  ➔ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE — You can visit NAR’s Research page to access the quarterly local market reports for your area at [http://www.realtor.org/research/subscription_data/localmarketreports](http://www.realtor.org/research/subscription_data/localmarketreports)

• New business openings in the community
• Community happenings — a new program at the YMCA
• Real estate related news- A property that is a “great buy” or comments about what is happening in the market
• Blog post (link back to your blog and/or hub for the full text)
• Volunteer work or fund raising events you are involved with

Lowe’s, a REALTOR Benefits® program partner, offers a FREE marketing tool just for REALTORS®. Sign up for their free fully customizable marketing tools including monthly enewsletters that offer great tips for your homebuyers and sellers. As part of their offerings, these enewsletters include valuable coupons and rebate offers. Visit [www.LowesRealtorBenefits.com](http://www.LowesRealtorBenefits.com) to sign up for the Lowe’s Program for REALTORS® and to learn about all the program offers that can help you in your eMarketing efforts.
DRIP CAMPAIGNS
You can set up various campaigns through a “drip service” to deliver emails on a scheduled basis. Programs like Top Producer and many template sites allow you to customize a delivery campaign to buyers/sellers. Be careful not to fill inboxes with “junk” and sales emails – you can get reported as spam and if enough people report you, it’s hard to fix.

→ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE — Send regularly timed updates to clients based on economic or annualized events. Send them the quarterly local market information, or information on tax issue in March.

EMAIL SIGNATURE LINES
The email signature can be an easy way to consolidate all of your spoke information without overwhelming consumers with links to your social media. It is important to use all forms of contact with a client or potential client as an area to market yourself and your business. Email signature lines are no exception. A few lines that appear at the end of every email you send identifying who you are and where they can reach you. You’ll also want to assure that you’ve listed your website address and/or blog address if it is separate. This is an easy way to consistently get a message across without being pushy. You can have a separate one for communicating on your mobile phone as well. A couple of examples include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sally Super Agent</th>
<th>Carl Connected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Association Broker</td>
<td>Licensed Association Broker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovely Real Estate</td>
<td><a href="http://www.Lovely">www.Lovely</a> Real Estate.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel (401) 555-1212</td>
<td>Phone: (401) 555-1212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax (401) 555-1211</td>
<td>Fax: (401) 555-1211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ssuperagent@lovelyre.com">ssuperagent@lovelyre.com</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.lovelyre.com">www.lovelyre.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect with me: Facebook</td>
<td>Connect with me: Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Twitter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

→ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE — Create various length and styles of email signatures — send them to your closest friends and family — ask which one they think is the best.

Don’t forget to also include your website in offline signatures. On your letters, in your advertisements, brochures, etc., everywhere!

If you need to put your social media sites in print, make sure to include the whole URL. Here are some examples:

- http://www.twitter.com/SallyAgent
- http://www.facebook.com/SallySuperAgent
- http://www.facebook.com/RealEstatePage (For Facebook Business page)
- http://www.linkedin.com/in/sallyagent
- http://www.youtube.com/user/sagent
EMAIL AUTO REPLIES
Staying in touch with clients and potential clients is key. With the speed at which we receive information online we anticipate almost instant communication in all of our professional and personal dealings. One way to ensure you are meeting the near instant demand for communication is by setting up auto replies to your emails. An auto reply will allow email senders to receive a confirmation that their email has been received. In addition, your email reply will have information on how best to get in touch with you and where they can go for more information.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – Set up an auto reply for your emails that tells a client how best to reach you, when they can anticipate you getting back to them, and finally where they can go to find out more information while they wait to hear back from you.

PROTECTING YOUR EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS
Every connection you make with a consumer, including email, is an opportunity for eMarketing. You can enhance the way you employ email as an eMarketing tool by using an online email service that is in compliance with the Can Spam Law and helps you monitor your marketing. Some examples include:

- www.Mailchimp.com
- www.Icontact.com
- www.ConstantContact.com

The Can Spam law is important. Can Spam stands for “The Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003” (CAN-SPAM Act) and became law in December 2003.

The act applies to all “commercial emails” whether solicited or unsolicited. Commercial emails are defined as “any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement of promotion of a commercial product or service.” The act requires senders of commercial emails to include the following information in every message:

- A legitimate return e-mail and physical postal address
- A clear and conspicuous notice of the recipient’s opportunity to decline to receive any future messages;

The best way to stay in compliance with can spam is to ask permission to e-mail by asking clients to sign up to receive communication like eNewsletters from you. Make sure you put opt-out language at the bottom of every email, allowing the client the option of removal from your mailing list.
OFFLINE MARKETING

When you are focused only on the “e” in eMarketing you may forget that you can still use your offline media to promote yourself online. Market yourself and your information by assuring that you are delivering a consistent message even in print, by continuing to send people back online to your “e” marketing tools. As we discussed, add your website, blog address, newsletter information and a call to action to all of your static print items and consider your overall marketing budget and determine if some of the dollars you spend on print advertising should be redirected to eMarketing. This will bring more traffic to your online marketing tools. You can use these static items to market your online tools:

- **Business Cards** - If you opt for a photo, please keep it current! Keep your business card as simple as possible, get as much information out there to contact you as you can without cluttering it up. Be creative.
- **Property Brochures** - Flyers found at your listings or marketing other listings you have.
- **Signage** - Some people have put their website and their name on signage. Be sure you comply with NAR and broker policy.
- **Name tags** - List your URL address around or on the second line of your business card.
- **Advertising Pieces and Flyers** - Any ads of any kind should contain your website address.
- **Newsletter** - Whether you use a print or email newsletter — be sure it contains your website address. Consistently ask people to sign up for this newsletter.
- **Clothing** - Some agents have had t-shirts made with their website address and worn them around or use as giveaways. This is a fun and catchy way to promote yourself offline and highlight your online presence.

⇒ PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE — [Moo.com](http://www.moo.com) has some smaller business cards with a way to use your own photographs on one side, or use photos with permission.
MAKING THE HUB AND SPOKE CONCEPT WORK

USING LINKS TO DRIVE CONSUMERS BACK TO YOUR HUB

All the tools discussed are powerful. They can be used on their own, or shared with others in your sphere. When you have information you believe is valuable what is the most successful way you can share it? Try creating links with the content and send it to your client base via email or your social media networks. Here are some examples of putting this into practice:

1. Any Web address can be copied and shared on your status updates on social networks.

2. Using a URL shortener like Bit.ly or TinyURL.com you can shorten your Web page address, allowing you to share more easily. These sites also monitor how many times people click on the link and the services are free.

3. Always include your Web address when creating a salutation, online and offline. You should include your hub’s website address in all communication in which you use your name. You can do this with a simple addition of the URL address after your name i.e.:
   a. Jane Smith, REALTOR®
   b. XYZ Realty, Inc.
   c. http://MYWEBSITE.com

4. Use a signature generator to make it fancier with a banner or photo that includes your URL address. Be careful with some of the email signatures that give too many sites to click on — people don’t have time to visit them all — make it one link — your hub.

5. Don’t forget to include your hub’s website address in your BIO/Profiles on all Social Networks you belong to.

ADVERTISING ONLINE

There are many ways to advertise and market yourself online below are a few of those items:

- SEM/Search Engine Marketing
- SEO Search Engine Optimization
- Banner Advertising
- Featured Listings
WHAT IS SEM / SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING?

SEM stands for “search engine marketing.” It is the process of gaining traffic from - or visibility on - search engines. SEM covers two aspects of marketing:

- Gaining traffic through paid search advertising
- Gaining traffic through free SEO efforts

Some people consider SEM the opportunity to gain traffic solely through paid ads. Today we see there are two types of results. Your website can appear as a listing on a search engine without having to pay for it. That is an organic search result.

Search engines also have paid search ads, sometimes referred to as “CPC” or “PPC” listings. Those acronyms come from the way advertisers are charged for these ads, on a Cost-Per-Click or Pay-Per-Click basis. If you pay, you get listed. When you stop paying, your listing goes away. You will notice on Google, for example, the paid listings in the “Sponsored Links” (the first two or three items that come up on a page and those that appear on the right side under the words “sponsored links”).

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – Do a “Google” search of real estate agent and YOUR-TOWN and see what listings come up.

You may wish to devote some part of your online marketing budget to SEM, or you can focus on bringing your website up in the natural or SEO listings. To find out more about placing an ad on Google go to the end of the Sponsored Links to the right of the page and click on the line that says “See Your Ad Here.”
“Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the visibility of a website or a Web page in search engines via the “natural” or unpaid (“organic” or “algorithmic”) search results. By posting content on your website, the search engines categorize the content found on your website so it can be found when a consumer does a search online. In general, the earlier (or higher on the page), and more frequently a site appears in the search results list, the more visitors it will receive from the search engine. SEO may target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, video search and industry-specific vertical search engines. This gives a website Web presence.”

“In the search world, SEO is equal to PR in the “real” world. Good SEO can’t guarantee good search engine coverage, any more than good PR can guarantee a favorable newspaper article. But it can increase the odds, if done within acceptable boundaries.”

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE – Here are some things you can do to increase your chances of appearing higher on a search engine search:

- Update your content frequently
- Use key words to describe content
- Use Google’s free Adwords keyword search to see trending topics [https://adwords.google.com/](https://adwords.google.com/)

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5 http://www.wikipedia.com/seo
4 www.searchengineland.com
BENEFITS OF ORGANIC SEO AND CONTENT ON YOUR WEBSITE

Not only will readers visit your hub because you have provided them the link to visit, but they will also find you when they are searching online using search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc. You want to be found by these users. Your name should appear within the first couple of pages, not only by searching your name, but also by searching common words/phrases that a consumer might search for in which you focus your content (aka keywords).

This is commonly referred to as building your SEO (Search Engine Optimization). When you utilize your keywords properly, you are investing in appearing on the first page of Google or other search engines. If you are working with the same keywords as many other people, it will be more difficult to get onto the first page. Think about niches — narrow down “real estate agent in YOURTOWN” - but focus on using other keywords that buyers/sellers might search for, and work with those. Many consumers use search engines to find agents and houses. Figure out what they type into the search box and write about that! If you tend to list homes on golf courses... focus on that... write about “living on the water” or “homes for Sale on the river” or “golf courses in MYCITY.” Of course, if you do not wish to be contacted as a result of a search, don’t write about that subject. For example, if you don’t like to work short sales, you may not want to focus your content on writing about the process of a short sale.

What is your target market? Use some of your pages to be a community expert. There are hundreds of agents that will appear on the search engine pages of “Real Estate Agent in Arizona” but how many agents will appear on Google when consumers search for “Restaurants in MYCITY” or “How to buy a Foreclosure” - Write content on different subjects and you can position yourself as an expert on that topic. Not only real estate information, but also about your community. Dare to be different.

Below are some topics that may be areas of interest to your community. By writing content on these topics you’ll increase your chances of getting picked up by relevant search engines. Pick one, research it and write relevant content. You can become a trusted expert.

- Restaurants, stores, parks and any local businesses
  - Write about them and they’ll often become an advocate for you
- School districts, local sports teams, events, golf courses and playgrounds
• Short sale, foreclosure processes - spell it out the details of the process.
• Home maintenance tips, curb appeal, home decorating ideas, landscaping and staging

When you focus on using keywords in your writing, be careful to not “stuff” the words in various places taking away the natural flow of the conversation in your content. Write naturally and insert your keywords when appropriate; not because you have to get them in.

When you are blogging you can “tag” your content with keywords. Tags are like the index in the back of a book. Each post should have 3-5 tags that are relevant to your post. Try to use tags with your keyword-enriched content. If you write a post about a local school district you may choose to tag: Town, School, Children. There is a box below or to the right of the blog post where you can enter your tags, separated by commas.

Writing content is much easier if you can rely on free content made for the real estate consumer. One way to do that is through the REALTOR® Content Resource (www.HouseLogic.com/Members), an exclusive, free tool for Members. The more than 300 (and growing) articles at the REALTOR® Content Resource, which come from NAR’s award-winning and comprehensive consumer website HouseLogic, cover not only home buying and selling, but everything homeowners need to enhance, protect, and maintain their homes.

The process to use the content is simple: When you access www.HouseLogic.com/Members, you’ll be prompted to choose the article or articles you want, to select how you want to use them, such as in your blog, and to download them. With seasonal home improvement, maintenance, insurance, tax, and finance content, you can, not only create a year-long marketing campaign on your blog, but you can also add the articles to your website and eNewsletter, or share them via Facebook and Twitter.

Regardless of where you choose to go for content, remember to always keep it legal; add terms of use and other legal protections to your privacy statement on the blog. Be sure you add a disclaimer to your blog noting that you do not assume responsibility for the accuracy of information posted by your visitors. Also, as a Member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, remember that the Code of Ethics applies even online. For resources on blogging policy, please see references.

As part of the preamble to the Code of Ethics, the Professional Standards Committee suggests that REALTORS® can take no safer guide than that which has been handed down through the centuries and embodied in the Golden Rule, “Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them.”
These small rectangular advertisements appear on all sorts of Web pages and vary considerably in appearance and subject matter, but they will share a basic function: if you click on them, your Internet browser will take you to the advertiser’s website. A banner ad is simply a special sort of hypertext link. The link is displayed as a box containing graphics (usually with textual elements) and sometimes animation. Banner advertising will give you an opportunity to get your name and your information in front of thousands of people at once. These ads can be targeted to the sites and interests of your clients.

REALTOR.com® offers banner advertising targeting an audience of engaged shoppers who are predominantly interested in searching for homes or getting a home price. The REALTOR.com® Featured Agent and Community Marketing System, allows an agent or builder to promote themselves or a development within a specific zip code. There are ten Ad spots available per market, limited to two per agent, with each appearing in rotation one at a time on a given page. Pricing is based on market size and traffic with annual and shorter-term subscriptions available.

REALTOR.com® will interview you and give you choices on the look and feel/creative supplied with the ad position. You will want to choose messaging and graphics that communicate your branding and the right image for your business. They can also suggest calls to action that deliver the type of buyer or seller you would like to target, and supply landing pages with lead capture forms that give consumers a place to request something from you.

Facebook now offers banner type ads on their site. They enable you to reach a very targeted audience by location, age and interests. They are simple image and text-based ads. Like pay per click you can control your budget by paying either for clicks or impressions.
REALTOR.com® offers “Featured Homes, designed to draw more attention to specific properties” to supplement their Showcase Listings product. These ads appear at the top and bottom of the “Find a Home” search results pages as well as the home page photo carousel. REALTORS® using Featured Homes can leverage this exclusive market advantage in listing presentations (sample is available from REALTOR.com/FREETRAINING) to demonstrate how they go the extra mile to get the best position on REALTOR.com®. There are eight slots available per zip code, limited to four per agent, and listings rotate randomly through the spots agents purchase. Pricing for an annual subscription is based on market size and traffic.
As with any online marketing, REALTORS® must keep their online presence in compliance with the REALTOR® Code of Ethics. We have included an updated version of the Code of Ethics and the articles that affect marketing online. These typically include Article 12 and 15.

Article 12 states: “REALTORS® shall be honest and truthful in their real estate communications and shall present a true picture in their advertising, marketing, and other representation. REALTORS® shall ensure that their status as real estate professionals is readily apparent in their advertising, marketing, and other representations, and that the recipients of all real estate communications have been notified that those communications are from a real estate professional.”

Article 15 states: “REALTORS® shall not knowingly or recklessly make false or misleading statements about competitors, their businesses, or their business practices.”

The Standard of Practice 15-2 states: “The obligation to refrain from making false or misleading statements about competitors’ businesses and competitors’ business practices includes the duty to not knowingly or recklessly repeat, retransmit, or republish false or misleading statements made by others. This duty applies whether false or misleading statements are repeated in person, in writing, by technological means (e.g., the Internet), or by any other means.”

Today’s agents should interpret the Code to apply to all types of interaction the REALTOR® may have on the Web. It remains the responsibility of the Members to comply with the requirements of local, state and Federal law and the Code of Ethics of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®.
Whenever identification is required by this policy it must include:

a. Name / Logo or brokerage
b. Name of Realtor®
c. Name of agent responsible for the website
d. State of Licensure

Also defined by the code, websites must include:

a. Up-to date and current content
b. No misuse of URLS or metatags
c. Disclosure to consumer if you collect email addresses and sell them to vendors
d. No disparaging comments that involve other practitioners
e. Compliance with other rules and laws
f. Can Spam Law for email
g. The Copyright Law that governs plagiarism of content.
Truly, investing in a website and online marketing can take a lot of time. It’s important to take a look at your campaigns and determine what is working and what isn’t by analyzing the changes you make. It can be fun to see what drives more visitors to your site: is it when you post a picture or when you have a blinking animated banner?

E-Marketing allows you to obtain full tracking figures of any online marketing campaign you put into place.

Measuring the statistics on your site is key in determining what is working and what needs to be adjusted. Google Analytics is a free platform for users from beginner to advanced levels of experience. Visit [www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics) and sign up. Once the analytics are active for a few weeks, you can start analyzing the data.

After you set up your Google Analytics account, (using the tracking code Google will supply for you) it will take a few days to get some results worth reading. It is fun to watch the number of visitors grow on your site – you can customize different dates using the drop down menu of calendars at the top right. Play around with the system and take a look at the different metrics that are important to you.

Advanced Users can explore the many facets of analytics by studying the various reports and options supplied. The possibilities of data reporting are huge. Some of the common things to look at are:

- **Visits** - How many people visited your site? Take a look at how many more visits were made to your site after you post a new article/page. Then compare the results to determine if the number of visitors grows based on your post.

- **Pages/Visit** - Determines the numbers of pages visitors are viewing after landing on the page they entered on.

- **Bounce Rate** - The percentage of initial visitors to a site who “bounce” away to a different site rather than continue on to other pages within the same site. If you have a high bounce rate, consider adjusting your content and pages to see if you can get clients to stay longer.
Further down on the Dashboard of Analytics are two reports that you should review, they are:

- Traffic Sources Overview
- Content Overview

By looking at these two reports in full view, you can see the exact source of most of your visitors.

- Where did they come from?
- Did they land on your site from Facebook or from a Google Search?
- You will see what keywords they searched for when they clicked on your page.

**HOW CAN YOU USE THESE TO HELP YOU?**

The traffic sources report can help in many ways. Try to test different sources and test different types of pages to see where you can generate the most traffic.

- If you post the local event calendar, do you get more hits than if you post about the mortgage rates?
- If you spend a lot of time on Facebook, but you don’t see the amount of traffic increasing as a result, maybe you shouldn’t use the “it’s helping my business” excuse for playing games anymore.
MARKETING INVENTORY ANALYSIS

Once your hub or Web presence is established, you will want to examine some of the offline and online tools you will use to bring people back to your site and most importantly your listings. This analysis will help you understand where you currently are and where you can go with your offline and online marketing campaigns. Follow these instructions to begin the marketing inventory analysis:

1. List the tools you are using right now in your marketing.
2. Rank the tools based on the priority of importance.
3. Take a look at the list again and determine what type of return you are getting on that marketing. Rate each item as a “High”, “Medium”, or “Low” return on investment (ROI). If you do not know the ROI on something note that for that item.
4. Examine the items priority compared to its ROI. Highlight any items in which the priority and investment do not match.
5. Put a flag by any item in which the priority for something is a high priority but doesn’t have a high return on investment. This is something you need consider revising your time and/or input on or not doing at all.
6. Examine all of the items that you’ve placed as unknown or low ROI. For any unknown items, if you can’t quantify or track it, consider replacing these low and unknown ROI item.
7. Review the eMarketing strategies you’ve learned about in this guide and list at least three items that you will consider using to replace low returning ones, or new items that you will simply add to your marketing mix.
8. Reevaluate your marketing strategy every quarter and try and replace low ROI items with higher ROI items. Use analytics to track your results and assure that you are constantly trying new ways to market yourself and your business.

Ask yourself these questions while you go through this exercise:

• Which tools should you discontinue?
• Which ones should you continue using?
• Which new tools could you now include in your marketing?
• Which tools should you spend more time on?

It’s important to note as much as we talk of the importance of eMarketing – if you are doing something that has been working for you offline – don’t stop – figure out ways to meld the two together.
TAKING IT OFFLINE

Are you interested in learning more about eMarketing, technology and how to use it? We recommend you take NAR’S e-PRO® certification, raising the bar for REALTORS® in social media and technical expertise. The evolved e-PRO® certification provides a roadmap to help you serve hyper-connected consumers of today and tomorrow. Course topics for Day 1 (live or online) include the changing market, how to connect with consumers, the online conversation, and reputation management. Day 2 (online only) provides hands-on discovery of business tech tools such as an e-strategy, mobile office, micro-blogging, rich media, and NAR resources.

For more information, visit http://www.epronar.com or email ePRO@REALTORS.org.

Interested in finding more social media, Internet marketing, and/or tech tools? You can find these items and more by visiting www.socialmediamarketinginstitute.com.

You can find videos on topics discussed in this product at: http://www.socialmediamarketinginstitute.com/NAR.

Videos include:

- How to Update Your Google Profile
- How to Update Your Facebook Profile
- How to Use Hootsuite
- Success With Skype

Amy Chorew is a national instructor highly experienced in helping managers and agents maximize the opportunities that technology offers them. Amy is a partner with the Social Media Marketing Institute, a group that teaches companies to use social media ethically and responsibly. They have worked to create the new evolved e-PRO program with NAR.

Kim Wood has a great deal of knowledge and expertise with individuals looking to expand their Internet presence. She is a licensed real estate agent and has used social media to enhance building relationships to help her business grow.

Visit the Social Media Marketing Institute today and sign up for its eNewsletter to stay on top of the changes in the social media industry.
NAR RESOURCES:

- e-PRO® Certification  http://www.epronar.com or email epro@realtors.org
- REALTOR® Content Resource  www.houselogic.com/members
- REALTOR.com® tools:
  - ASK A REALTOR® blog  http://www.realtor.com/blogs/featured/
  - Facebook Page Creation Assistance  http://www.facebook.com/realestatemarker
  - Claim and Update your Profile  http://marketing.realtor.com/cmp/redux/3
  - Mobile  www.realtor.com/mobile
  - Featured Listing  www.REALTOR.com/FREETRAINING
- REALTOR Benefits® Partner Offers  www.REALTOR.org/RealtorBenefits
  - Lowes Program  www.LowesRealtorBenefits.com
- Social Media for REALTORS®: 101 Dos and Don’ts and Blogging  http://www.Realтор.org/Store
- Social Media Toolkit for Association Executives:
- Use of Social Media in the Real Estate in Business
  -  http://www.realtor.org/about_nar_secured/social_media_for_associations
- 2010 REALTOR Technology Survey via the Center for Realtor Technology  www.Realtor.org/CRT
- 2010 Member Profile  http://www.realtor.org/prodser.nsf/products/E186-12-10?OpenDocument
• NAR Field Guides:
  - Field Guide to Marketing with Blogs
    - http://www.realtor.org/library_secured/library/fg910
  - Field Guide to Social Networking for REALTORS®
    - http://www.realtor.org/library_secured/library/fg125

Social Media Network Help
• Google Video www.google.com/profiles
• Facebook Video http://www.facebook.com/help/
• Linked In http://learn.linkedin.com/
• Twitter http://support.twitter.com/
• Foursquare http://support.foursquare.com/home
• Flickr http://www.flickr.com/about/
• You Tube http://www.youtube.com/t/about

Social Media Management Platforms
• Hootsuite Video www.Hootsuite.com
• Seesmic www.Seesmic.com
• Tweetdeck www.Tweetdeck.com
• Tweetgrid www.Tweetgrid.com

Listing Syndication Sites:
• www.trulia.com
• www.zillow.com
• http://realestate.yahoo.com/
• www.RealEstateShows.com
• www.point2agent.com
• www.Postlets.com
• www.VFlyer.com
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NAR’s e-PRO® Certification Program provides a roadmap to help you serve hyper-connected consumers of today and tomorrow. Course topics for Day 1 (live or online) include the changing market, how to connect with consumers, the online conversation, and reputation management. Day 2 (online only) provides hands-on discovery of business tech tools such as e-strategy, mobile offices, micro-blogging, rich media, and NAR resources. For more information, visit http://www.ePRONAR.com or email ePRO@REALTORS.org.

Social Media for REALTORS®: eMarketing

This easy-to-use guide is the third installment from NAR in the Social Media for REALTORS® series, and can help you access and make the most of your marketing through developing a highly effective eMarketing strategy.