

Marketing Messaging

3 Tips to Increase the Effectiveness of Your Website

by Tricia Andreassen

Just having a website isn't enough to set yourself apart in today's highly competitive real estate market. If you're looking to take your website to the next level, the following guidelines will help you increase the effectiveness of your website and give prospects a reason to keep coming back.

Provide Valuable Content

Now more than ever, consumers are looking for unique information. Not only do they want to know about the towns and communities within the local market, they also want to know what makes you the best REALTOR® to work with. This usually revolves around your insight into the home-buying/-selling process, how customer-focused you are, what types of services you offer and how easy you are to get along with.

Valuable content goes further than just conveying your personality, however. By taking the time to provide solid, up-to-date information on your website, you can also showcase information about the market(s) you serve. Your site shouldn't be about why you are No. 1 in your marketplace. Instead, you should use your website to provide helpful advice and tips, such as information about what specific neighborhoods are like and how they have changed over the last 10 years. In addition, tips to resolve issues that may arise between buyers and sellers can also come in handy.

Build Rapport

If you take listings, your job is to assist the seller in obtaining the highest price possible for their property.

In order to do this, not only do you need to advertise your listings on your website, you also want to drive potential buyers to your site.

From a buyer's point of view, getting them interested and motivated to take the next step comes from educating them about the area in addition to letting your personality shine through. Requiring them to fill out a form that promises they will only do business with you isn't going to cut it in today's market.

Design Your Site with Visitors in Mind

The first step toward designing an effective website is to place yourself in your visitors' shoes and decide what type of website would most effectively meet their needs. While some companies sell generic, template sites that use frames or are difficult to navigate, others include ads for various vendors, which may actually drive traffic away from your site. If a website company offers to design your site for free—as long as you pay a hosting fee—there's a good chance they're making money from the site somehow, and displaying other people's ads on your site is one way they go about doing this. Sites that have numerous pop-ups tend to annoy visitors as well.



Before you even start building your website, it's crucial that you ask yourself who is most likely to visit. Once you have defined your target audience, the following questions will help you cater to their specific needs: What type of information will they be looking for? What do they do in their spare time? What are their goals and aspirations? Where do they see themselves in 5-10 years?

While you'll probably have a number of different people visiting your site for different reasons, be sure your site can answer their questions and address their problems as quickly and easily as possible—in their language, tone and style. **RE**

Tricia Andreassen is the CEO/founder of Pro Step Marketing. She is a leading industry Web-strategy expert, a nationally recognized speaker with Broker Agent Speakers Bureau and one of RISMedia's Real Estate magazine's monthly columnists. For more information, please visit www.ProStepMarketing.com or call (866) 799-9888.