

Social Media & Real Estate

PART 1 – Overview of Social Media (10 minutes)

- What is it
 - Social Networking is a way for people to connect and share experiences and look for new ones
 - Social Networking is a way to keep up with many more people than you could ever possibly touch in a given day in person, on the phone or through email
 - Social Networking is a way to get information out personally and quickly
- Why does it matter
 - 2 years ago people thought texting was unnecessary & for kids
 - 5 years ago people didn't think you needed mobile access to email
 - 10 years ago people didn't think you needed email
 - 15 years ago people didn't think you needed cell phones
 - 20 years ago people didn't think you needed personal computers
 - 25 years ago people thought cable tv was unnecessary
 - 30 years ago people thought fax machines were unnecessary
 - Social Media is the next step in the evolution of communications
- What can it do for you
 - Lets say you have a specific area you farm, and that specific area has 200 homes
 - You can mail to everyone and hope they will see your mailing & pay \$100
 - You can pay someone to walk it for about the same cost, you'll be sure the material gets there, but you lose the ability to interact with those people
 - You can do it yourself, but it would probably take you all day to walk
 - Regardless, you still you need to put yourself in front of those people
 - Now let's look at another model –
 - Lets say you connected to your friends, some of their friends, neighbors, and people you've done business with, worked with, met at meetings, etc.
 - You'll have about 100 people in your network.
 - Each of those people have done probably the same thing and they each have somewhere around 100 people in their network as well , and so on.
 - You get a new listing that you can showcase something engaging about that property, and you post a link to that listing through social networking
 - You just hit 100 people, and if 10% of those individuals have a reason to pass it along, through email, reposting, or some other fashion, your listing was just put in front of 1100 people, 1000 of which now have a reason to contact you that you otherwise would have never known
 - And it took you about a minute, and cost you nothing
 - Social Networking isn't a replacement or substitute, but instead another alternative to get your message out in the easiest, quickest and most cost effective way possible...

Getting Started

- List of sites
 - There are hundreds of different sites that all have very different basic interests and functionalities that make them unique.

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites
 - See our database for the best uses for the most common systems
 - They are quite dizzying to try to follow all of them, and doing so is an effort that isn't even feasible when you are just getting your feet wet.
 - Over time you can build a presence on each of these sites, but you have to choose somewhere.
- Prioritizing sites
 - First focus on the top 3 most common sites –
 - Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
 - When you have the time, look at real estate oriented sites as well –
 - ActiveRain, RealTownNetworks, Zillow / Trulia / dwelicious
 - When you become comfortable using the sites you are on, begin looking at what other sites are best incorporated into your business plans
- Coordinating sites
 - You can connect Facebook, Twitter and Myspace to interact with one another so your presence grows on all 3 while only needing to work on one
 - There are services such as Ping.fm, HelloTXT and others that will syndicate to your blog, other sites, and even Instant Messaging systems so your updates are sent everywhere
 - Additionally you want to work with “website shortening” services such as bit.ly, and tinyurl to make your posts and links work w/ fewer characters
 - Finally there are websites and services that can bring everything completely together in one simple singular location for you.

Building Presence

- Things you need
 - You will need several things to get started and set up your page so it looks like you are actually active on your page
 - Profile Picture (Try to make one “web ready” on picasa etc.)
 - Short (200 words or less) Bio
 - contact information (websites, email, phone, etc.)
 - a “saying” or quote that you really like
 - Work & school background (to connect to other people of like interests)
- Things to consider
 - Most sites ask for personal interests, so give some thought to:
 - Hobbies
 - Sports
 - Interests
 - TV Shows
 - Music
 - Books
 - People love browsing through pictures, and sharing on social media can be easy
 - What are some of the things you've seen online that you like? Share them
 - Where else would you like for people to find you? Blogs? Other Networking Sites?
- Things to avoid
 - Nobody is looking for a sales pitch
 - Bragging is one thing, being a braggart is another

- Be personable, but not too personal
 - You don't need to put every detail about you online
- Most people don't want to be preached to
 - Religion and Politics are just fine, and in fact encouraged
 - However you should think about what you say before you say it
 - Often it's a good idea to read what you've written before you publish it
 - Lastly ask yourself "how else could this be interpreted" because it will
- There is often a fine line between funny and offensive, be sure of what you are saying

Connecting to Other People

- First Steps
 - There are hundreds of millions of people worldwide on social networking
 - It is entirely likely that a lot of people you know are already using some form of social networking
 - Some of these individuals may have "pending requests" to connect with you because they have previously sent you an invitation to join, accept their invitations
 - "Finding People" can be as simple as importing your contacts, allowing the site to search your address books for people, or just manually entering names / email addresses to see if people are already using that site
 - You can also do targeted searches for people listed with schools, companies, organizations or interests
- Best Practices
 - Once you are connected to people, it is appropriate to see if you know any of the people they are connected to
 - It isn't as well received to blanket invite all of their contacts to connect to you, especially if you do not actually know the person they are connected to
 - Joining Organizations, Groups, and Causes can also enable your ability to reach out and see if those individuals are people who would like to connect, especially if you have had some sort of interaction (commenting on the same issue / topic, playing a game, etc.)
 - Accept people's requests if you do in fact know them. People get offended if you disregard their connection requests
 - Many systems have mechanisms to limit what specific lists, or individuals can see on your "profile", enabling those mechanisms helps build the contacts, but limits your exposure
- Growing Your Network
 - Browse through the "suggested connections" portions of sites to see if you know people
 - Look for common contacts w/ your connections
 - Find people through groups, interests, or networks
 - Add new clients, business contacts, and other individuals as you meet them. Connecting to new people is less involved than sending an email.
 - Add a "connect to me on _____" link in your email signature
 - Add a "connect to me on _____" link on your websites, blogs, and profiles
 - Become active in Groups / Pages / Interests / Causes
 - Speak your mind about issues & connect those comments to similar areas of interests
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- When you get more comfortable using social networking as an outreach effort, consider using the additional features available to you that can help grow the impact of your efforts on the system, features such as:
 - Creating Groups / Pages / Interests / Causes
 - Creating additional Pages / Profiles that showcase specific efforts of yours
 - Using advertising to get your reach beyond your network
 - Creating fun pictures / videos / posts that can be re-shared

Messaging

- Do's and Dont's
 - Do become familiar with "web abbreviations" whether or not you use them
 - A comprehensive list is here - <http://www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php>
 - An even more comprehensive list is here - http://www.webopedia.com/quick_ref/textmessageabbreviations.asp
 - Included is a simple list of the MOST common
 - Do keep your messages short, less than 140 characters (so they can be reused)
 - Do try to be interesting, funny and engaging
 - Do regularly let people know what you are up to if it is interesting
 - Do resist the temptation to correct someone's spelling and grammar in their posts
 - Don't "over-tweet", a couple times a day isn't bad. A couple times an hour turns people away, unless it is really good
 - Don't tell people mundane details of your life - no one cares that you are at starbucks, unless Michael Jackson is serving you
 - Don't post anything that you wouldn't want everyone you will ever know reading
 - Don't be offensive or rude to people
 - Don't be either too wordy, or too jargon, or too "web abbreviation" heavy in posts
- Shifting Message
 - Your profile is about you, your messages are about you, but for people to care they have to relate to what you are saying.
 - Think about how a reader would react to your message
 - BE INTERESTING
- Write short, link to detail
 - Think of those absurdly verbose "comments" sections in listings... don't be that
 - Instead give a quick thought, and if there's more to say, link elsewhere.
 - When possibly use a linking service like bit.ly, bright kite, tinyurl or others

Making A Difference

- Promoting Others
 - Re-post interesting information that others post, and give them credit
 - Connect people whenever you have the opportunity to do so
- Promoting Causes
 - Be more than just a person selling real estate
 - Show the issues you care about
- Building Pages / Groups / Fundraising / Games
 - Use different utilities to promote different functions of your involvement

- Always make sure you have a presence for your real estate business
- Always make sure you are responsive to your customers

Build Your Presence

- Get Mobile
 - Activate mobile updates
 - Learn to send pictures, videos and other updates from your phone
 - Have systems repost for you in all of your social networks, so you only have to do it once
 - Do as much as you can “on the go” rather than from the computer
- Other Social Networking Sites
 - Research where else your clients are spending their time
 - Incorporate different site technologies to bring your clients back to you
- Coordinate Messages
 - Make your presence similar everywhere
 - Make your messages appear everywhere
 - Make your presence grow similarly everywhere

Conclusion

- Why You Should Be Involved
 - Its where your customers are
 - It builds presence
 - It’s a way to exchange ideas, plans, and concepts to expand your business
 - It’s a way to connect with your clients, potential clients, and professionals in a very personal and relationship building manner
- How to do it “Right”
 - Don’t be overbearing
 - Don’t be in your face
 - Be engaging and interesting
 - Be responsive
 - Avoid the “time suck” that can occur from these networks
- Grow Your Capabilities
 - Build presences everywhere
 - Build an identity & interact
 - Capture the advancements in technology to make it easy
 - Be the first out of the gate in the newest arenas
 - Coordinate the social utilities to really build synergy for your online presence