

# 2018 REAL ESTATE MARKETING ANALYSIS

Survey Reveals Brokers and Agents Differ On Primary Marketing Priorities

Adwerx and REAL Trends partnered to answer the question: What do agents and brokers spend their marketing dollars on? The results indicate a marked difference in priority. What might surprise you is the untapped potential for agents and brokers to align their marketing initiatives.

## BROKERS

- Brand Awareness
- Brand Reputation
- Community Involvement
- Print Advertising

## BROKERS & AGENTS

- Company Website
  - Social Media
  - Yard Signs
- Listing Portals

## AGENTS

- Lead Generation
- Drive Commissions
- Direct Mail
- Open Houses

## Conclusion:

Brokers/owners prioritize spend on branding initiatives while agents look to deliver more immediate results.

When looking at trends in big data and the technology to utilize it, it's clear we are in the beginning stages of an industry-wide change that can align how brokers and agents market to serve both groups' interests.

# Brand Awareness vs. Lead Generation

The 30-question survey saw **42% of over 440 respondents** identify as a Broker-Owner of a Real Estate Brokerage. The remainder identified as agents claiming a range of titles. The survey showed that four types of agent marketing tactics stood out in response to the question, “*What do you invest in to market your brand?*”:



**websites (83%)**



**social media (81%)**



**yard signs (80%)**



**listing portals (72%)**

Close behind were **open houses (71%)** and **direct mail (66%)**

The top four broker responses to the same question were identical in priority. However, Community Involvement (**82%**) and Print Advertising (**75%**) replaced Open Houses and Direct Mail, respectively. The last two broker responses stand out in the survey because community involvement and print advertising are long-proven tactics for brand awareness. In contrast, what's more important to agents are open houses and direct mail, clearly proven methods used for lead generation. The survey also listed a number of marketing channels and asked respondents: “How much do you invest monthly in these channels?”

The top three marketing channels by agents are listing portal leads, social media, and direct mail. Again, these are tools best for accumulating leads. Brokers responded to the same question accordingly: print advertising, outdoor signage, and radio, all media channels ideal for brand awareness. We can logically take away that brokers are focused on the long-term while their agents generally center spending priorities on what provides the most immediate, tangible return.

## Differing Priorities

The survey asked both agents and brokers to identify the three most successful marketing channels used.

- | Agents listed, in order: | Brokers listed:     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| • Social Networking      | • Company Website   |
| • Listing Portals        | • Yard Signs        |
| • Direct Mail            | • Social Networking |

Spending priorities between agents and brokers significantly differ based on each party's marketing goals.

## Agents are focused on clients

Social networking is affordable, easy to set-up, and provides immediate, easy to measure audience reaction. Portals, while expensive, offer agents exposure and their clients' peace of mind. And direct mail is a staple for post-closing announcements and neighborhood exposure. Together, the three make sense as a way for agents to stay relevant in their market, earning new leads and keeping up with key referral sources.

## Brokers are bolstering their brand

For brokers, a company website serves as a universal catch-all for leads, awareness, and in many cases, operational efficiencies when linked to other business operations. These are features common to today's advanced web solutions.

A website, when considered a capital investment by a brokerage, can become a valuable business asset. They also serve as a brand hub, where brokers can communicate how they approach business, what they look for in agents, and customer success stories. These larger, big-picture messages are intrinsic to

establishing and maintaining a brand. Also, agent pages and bios on a website help a broker make that brand tangible and positions her or his agents as representatives for the brand. These initiatives are crucial to any business that wants to be thought of as trustworthy and valuable to its customers. Another priority for brokers, yard signs, are like direct mail for agents. They offer hyper-local exposure and serve as a fundamental component to real estate marketing.

It's reasonable to forecast that budgets for social networking will displace website budgets in the near future as both agents' and brokers' top spending priority. Until then, it offers brokers a powerful supplement to their website investment and, if leveraged correctly, an attractive way to minimize spending per lead.

## Websites

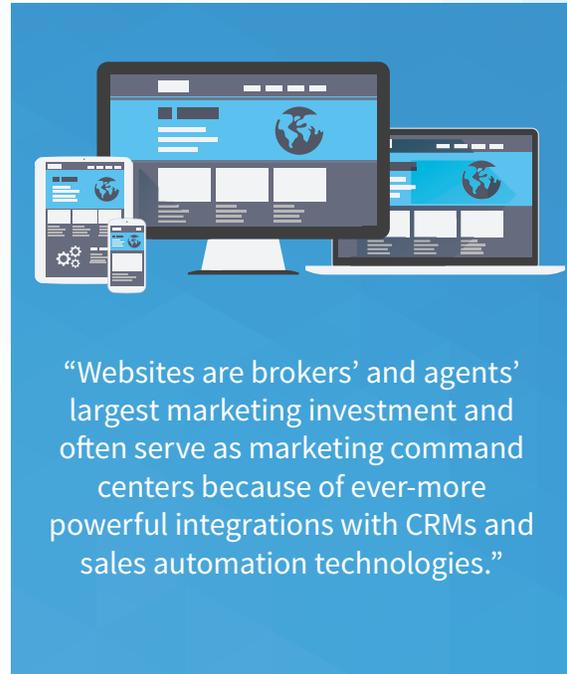
Websites are brokers' and agents' largest marketing investment and often serve as marketing command centers because of ever-more powerful integrations with CRMs and sales automation technologies.

As the survey shows, more and more agents are investing in their own web presence, leaving their broker's site to serve merely as another opportunity for a click-through. As these new strategies are being adopted by agents, brokers may consider adjusting their own operations to ensure the messaging on agents' websites aligns with the broker's brand promise.

This is possible by investigating enterprise web solutions that enable agent freedom in messaging and visuals, but remain part of the overall team approach. Brokers could establish relationships with web vendors who create branding standards while offering discounted site solutions to agents.

Websites are great tools for audience measurement opportunities (landing pages, information forms, traffic metrics) when connected directly to online and print ad campaigns, radio, and community involvement campaigns.

Instead of investing in high-end, expensive websites with sophisticated, back-end lead assignment and other advanced webtech to oversee agent content, brokers' money may be alternatively spent ensuring their agents' individual websites adhere to at least minimal branding and legal standards.



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## Social Media

Facebook's advertising tools are incredibly granular, and when combined with online digital advertising, can allow brokers to build brand awareness across broader audiences, as well as win leads from localized buyers and sellers. Brokers would be wise to consider the benefits of content marketing via social media. Facebook is more powerful when a brand is able to elevate itself above the din of a follower's typically inane news feed. Content marketing can push users to websites and listings, build local trust, and trigger retargeted advertising campaigns.

It's important for brokers to understand that Facebook newsfeed algorithms have recently changed, putting a focus back on personal relationships and individual interests, making the need for valuable content more critical than ever before. Those looking to commit to Facebook might want to consider engaging social media professionals or reading up on how best to leverage this change.

## The Future of Real Estate Marketing

The survey makes it clear that brokers and agents are at odds on what constitutes the best way to spend money on marketing. However, the discrepancies make sense given the fundamental needs of each others' business. Agents are more focused on the short-term while brokers are focused on building long-term stability, through churn of individual agents. An alignment of these marketing objectives can strengthen the broker/agent relationship, and improve agent retention.

# “Brokers need to create marketing programs that unify the needs of all stakeholders”

Brokers have long looked to invest in marketing and operational technologies focused on increasing agents' productivity. However, today's highly-accessible technologies are largely embraced by agents because of the pace of consumer adoption. This makes it more challenging than ever for brokers to predict where best to invest funds.

Brokers need to create marketing programs that unify the needs of all stakeholders; offering agents ongoing support and tying together direct lead generation with long-term brand awareness in a market. It's the most proven model for sustaining a top-of-mind presence within a market.

Helping agents meet their goals of attracting more clients and strengthening their Sphere of Influence is crucial for retention. Agents will never feel totally comfortable if support for their lead generation efforts isn't reflected in what their broker executes.

## ***The issue can be resolved, however.***

Brokers should consider implementing enterprise technology solutions, backed by business decisions, that bind both the branding and sales goals of each party. If agents are to be representatives of the brand, their lead generation tactics will be better off for it, and vice versa. Despite all the changes in the industry, the fundamentals are still true:

**Brand growth backed by strong lead generation is a sure-fire recipe for growth and profitability.**

