

2018 Real Estate Marketing Strategy Survey Report



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Introduction

Each year, the million-plus real estate professionals nationwide set time aside from their day-to-day to take a deep breath, examine their success from the past 12 months, and learn what they can do better in the year ahead to boost their bottom lines. It's during this period that agents and brokers put pen to paper to produce distinct, comprehensive real estate marketing plans for their brands.

Some agents will aim to produce more content in the upcoming months to bolster their website traffic and lead generation. Others will strive to enhance their email nurture campaigns so they can convert more prospects into clients. The one commonality all of these industry pros share, though, is the desire to better their businesses.

To give you a sense of what other real estate pros across the country have in store for their real estate marketing plans in 2018, we've compiled a plethora of data. This information can give you insights into how much time, energy, and money other agents and brokers plan to spend for their digital presence this year — and inform how you structure your own marketing efforts over the next several months.

Seth Price

VP of Industry Relations, Placester



Who We Surveyed

We didn't want to hear from just one niche kind of real estate professional. We wanted to get responses from a wide variety of industry members from all over to get a detailed understanding of their online marketing approaches and insights.

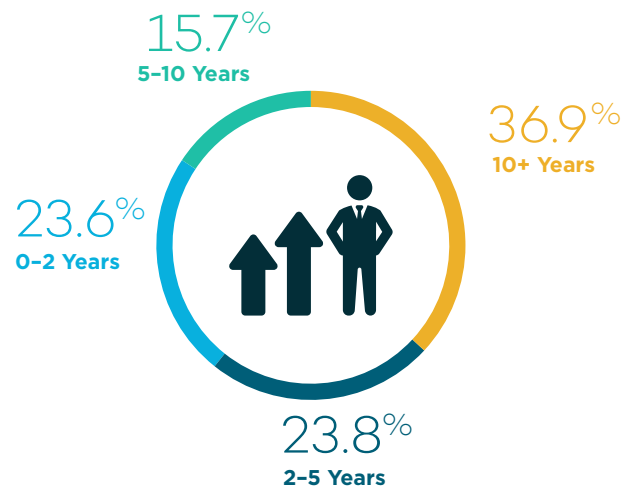
What type of real estate pro are you?

Survey responses: 337



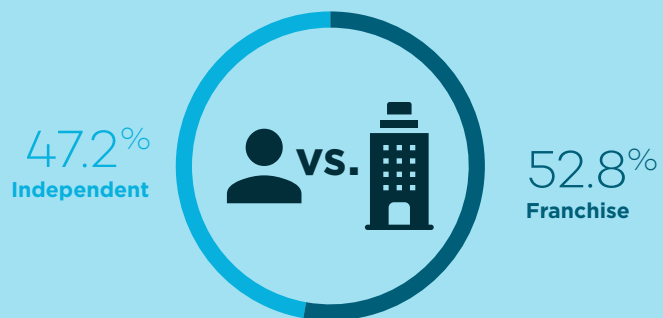
What's your industry experience level?

Survey responses: 332



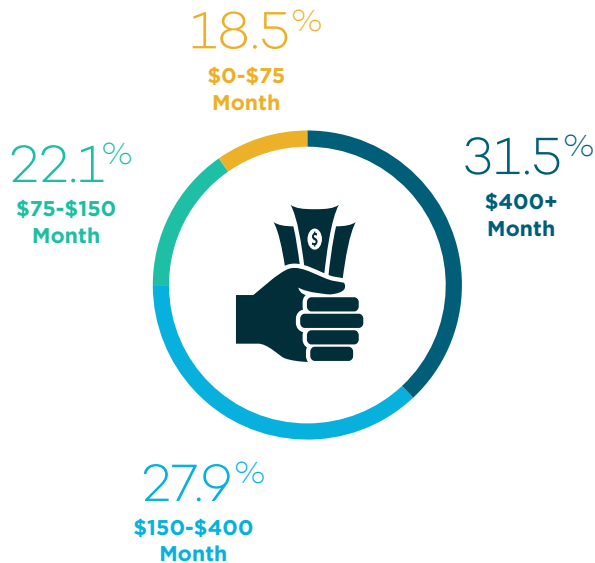
What kind of agency do you work for?

Survey responses: 331



“I plan to spend \$_____ on my marketing.”

Survey responses: 323

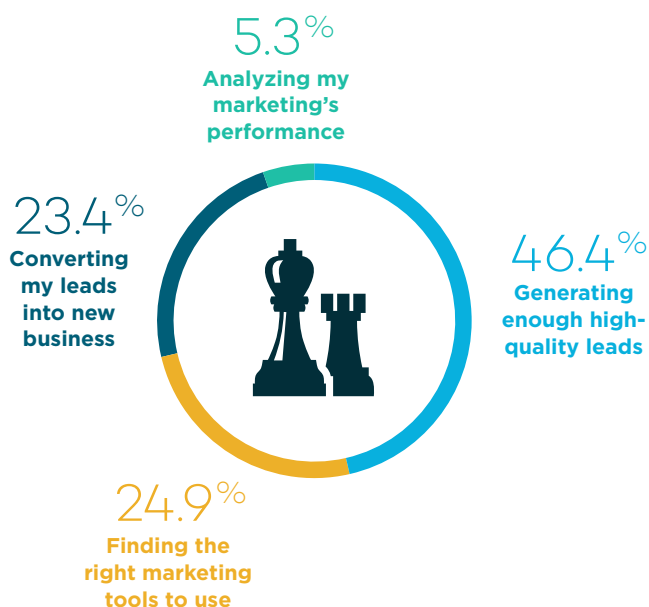


What this data means:

Agents and brokers understand it's more than worth it to allocate significant amounts of marketing spend toward activities and resources that can enhance their online presence. Think about how you can shift your marketing dollars around as needed. In other words, ditch any activities that don't work well (or at all) and redistribute any money spent on them to proven tactics or new ones you think could work better.

“My top marketing challenge will be . . .”

Survey responses: 313

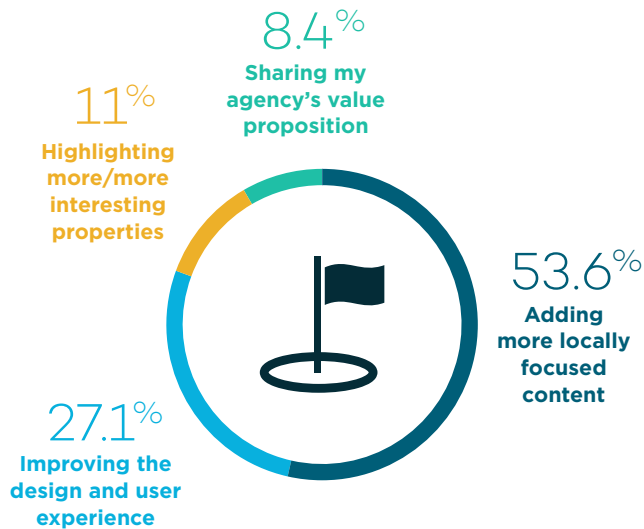


What this data means:

Lead generation will always be a focus for real estate professionals . . . and rightfully so. You can never become complacent with your lead gen strategy — that's how you end up with a dried-up lead pipeline and lower take-home pay at year's end. With that in mind, reevaluate your digital lead gen approach used to date and determine how you can improve it in 2018 (e.g. spend more on targeted advertising campaigns).

“I’ll make my site more appealing by . . .”

Survey responses: 302



What this data means:

All of these activities can certainly help better agents' websites, but it's clear creating more in-depth, useful content for one's audience is the tactic industry pros think will help them the most. Craft an editorial calendar for your 2018 content efforts, and determine which pages and posts you should create first and foremost. There is no right answer. Just be sure to keep your audience's pain points in mind.

“My biggest website objective is to . . .”

Survey responses: 299



What this data means:

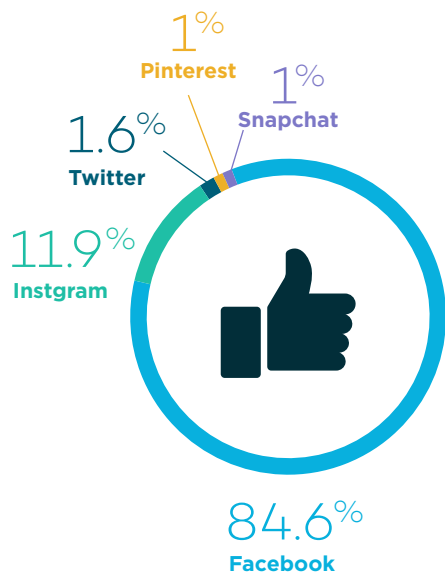
Your prospects want to work with someone they know has a good grasp on all-things real estate: from knowing the best neighborhoods to understanding how to negotiate with other agents. So, become as knowledgeable as possible about both your local housing market and general real estate concepts. Then, share that expertise on your website, in videos, and via social media to prove you're a local thought leader.





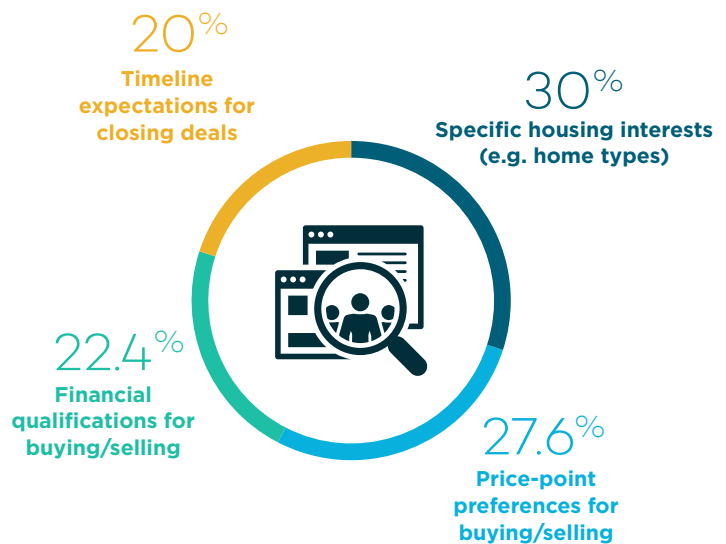
“The social network I will use most is . . .”

Survey responses: **302**



“I want to learn ____ about my audience.”

Survey responses: **283**



What this data means:

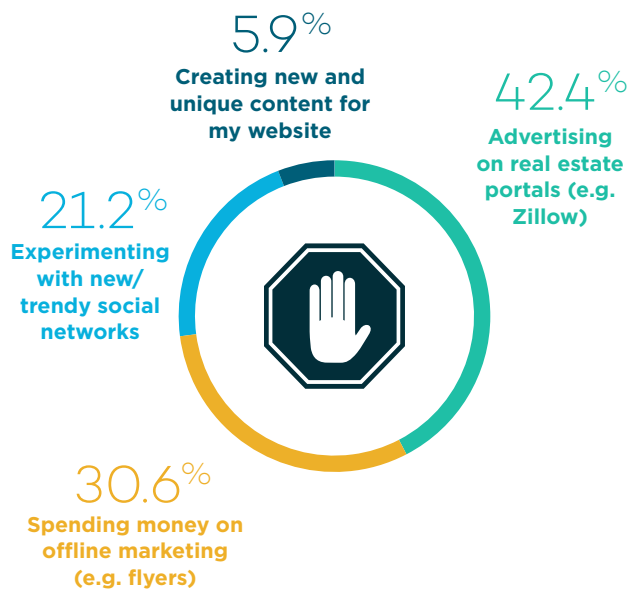
Did you really expect a different social network to receive the most votes? Facebook remains the Champion of Social Networks — and for good reason. It has the largest user base where most agents are able to generate quality leads. One reason it's such an effective social channel is its targeted advertising platform and customizable Business Page features. Take advantage of those two tools, and you'll greatly enhance your web presence.

What this data means:

There was no clear-cut favorite response in this survey category. Agents want to learn a variety of things about their prospects, so it should come as little shock each possible answer received plenty of votes. As it pertains to learning more about your audience, think about how you discover their housing timelines and preferences. One excellent way to do this is via custom lead capture forms with fields asking them for this kind of information.

“A tactic I intend to stop using is . . .”

Survey responses: 283

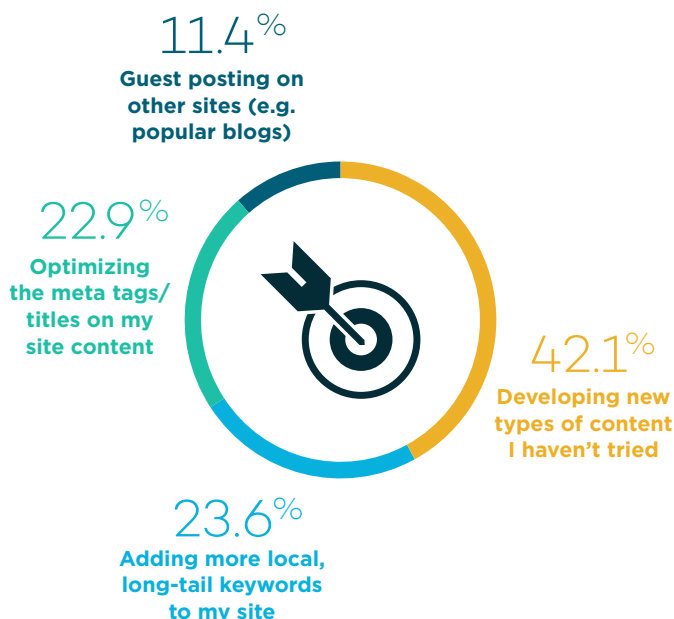


What this data means:

Ask 10 real estate agents how they feel about using real estate portals like Zillow, Trulia, and Realtor.com to generate leads, and chances are you'll get 10 different answers. These platforms can certainly provide a high quantity of leads, provided you shell out a pretty penny to rent ZIP codes on each channel. Having said that, you should be focused on earning higher-quality leads, meaning it may not be worth it to spend money on these outlets.

“The SEO task I intend to focus most on is . . .”

Survey responses: 264

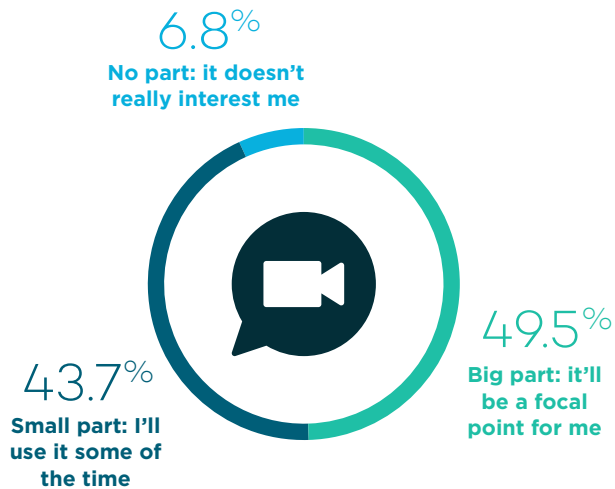


What this data means:

There are seemingly endless types of real estate content you can create for your website to attract new visitors, turn those visitors into leads, and nurture your leads over time. Blog posts and community pages are the industry standard, but don't forget to think outside the box with your content strategy. For instance, you could offer a virtual tour page featuring 3D tours of your listings or a testimonials page featuring several client reviews.

“Video will be a ____ part of my marketing.”

Survey responses: 274

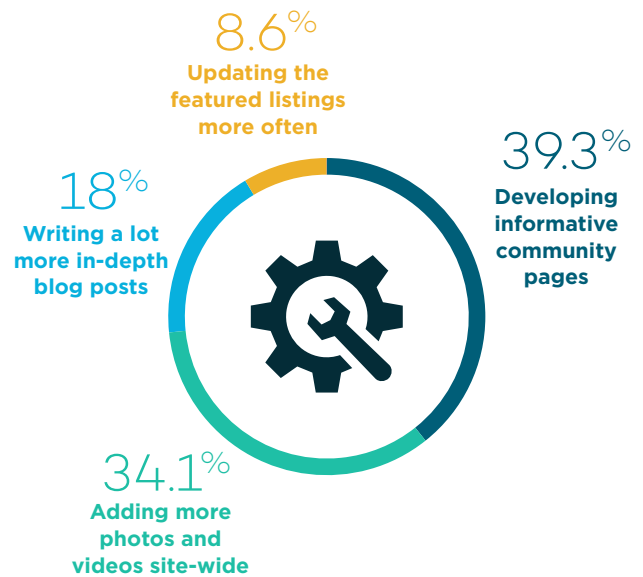


What this data means:

Video is the future of real estate marketing, so it doesn't seem surprising the overwhelming majority of agents and brokers surveyed stated they plan to incorporate video into their digital strategies in 2018. Remember: You don't need a professional camera, lighting and sound gear, or a production studio to make stellar videos. Your smartphone and tablet can suffice as your video collateral until you can afford the high-end video tools.

“I plan to better optimize my site by...”

Survey responses: 260



What this data means:

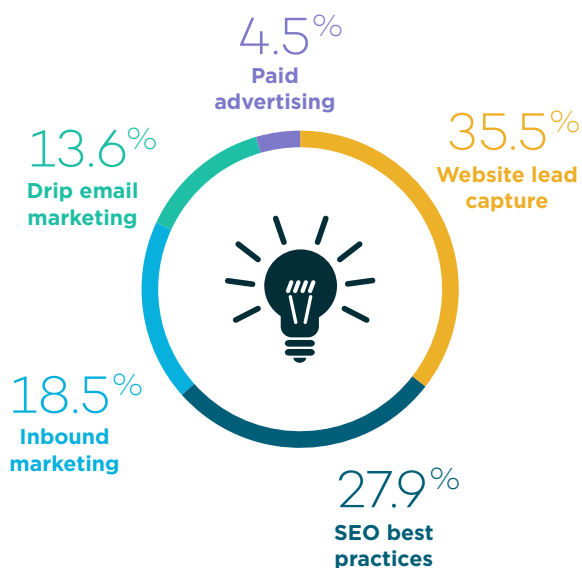
Home buyers who want to understand more about the communities in which they plan to purchase — like, say, those looking for properties in your market — typically try to find agents in those areas and visit those agents' websites. Be sure your site has plenty of video tours of your market that detail every last detail about neighborhoods and developments and accompanying copy to share additional information about your market.





“I want to learn more about ____ in 2018.”

Survey responses: 256

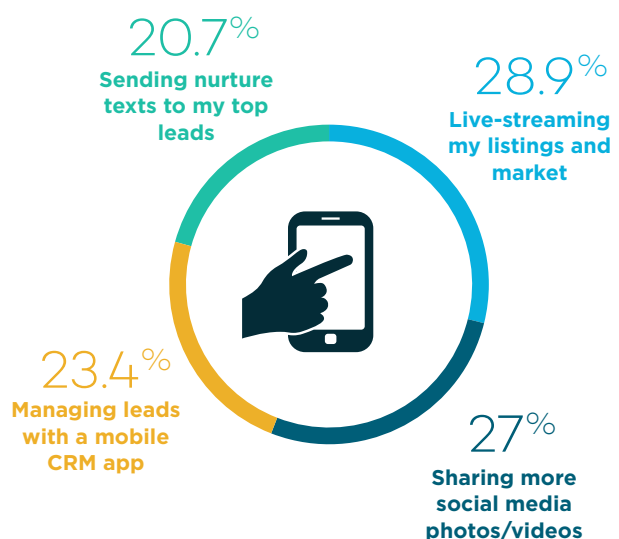


What this data means:

Custom lead capture is your best bet for transforming website visitors into new leads, so either get a new site provider that offers templated, customizable forms you can add to each page or add a plug-in to your current site that allows you to create such forms. You'll thank yourself for creating a dozen or so distinct forms you can test across your site, as you'll be able to determine which ones work best, then double down on them site-wide.

“A mobile marketing tactic I want to try is . . .”

Survey responses: 249

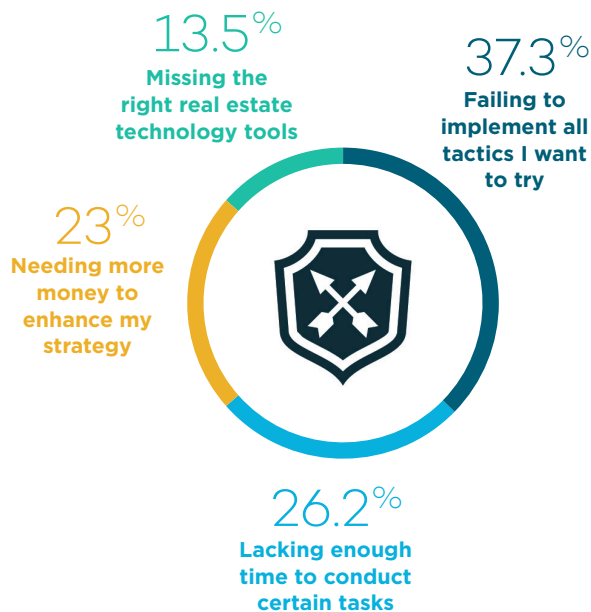


What this data means:

Another survey question in which all responses received a fair amount of votes. There really is no wrong answer here. The important thing is simply experimenting with different mobile marketing activities so you can see which ones are worth your time and energy and which can be tossed by the wayside. Live streams and multimedia sharing will be your most cost-friendly tactics, since you can carry out those techniques for free on Facebook and other channels.

“My biggest marketing pain point will be . . .”

Survey responses: 244

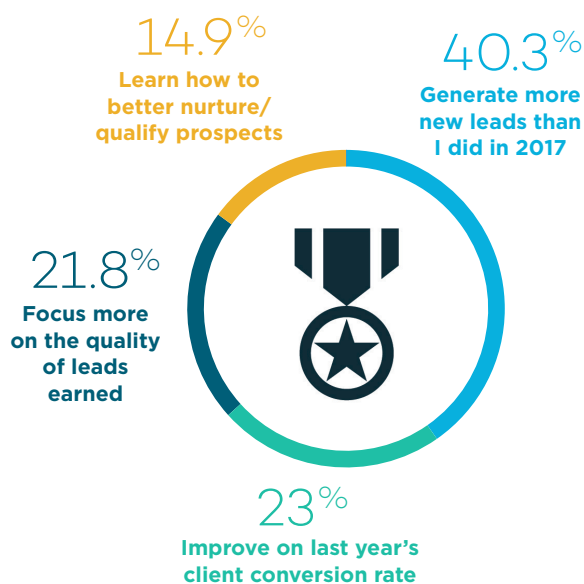


What this data means:

It's great to see agents and brokers have intentions to implement so many real estate marketing activities in 2018. Few brands, real estate and otherwise, are able to put every single marketing activity they want to try into play during a given year, but you should still try to do so. The more you're able to test over the course of a 12-month period, the more you'll be able to fine-tune your marketing strategy over time (e.g. ditch poor-performing tactics).

“My 2018 marketing will be a success if I . . .”

Survey responses: 242

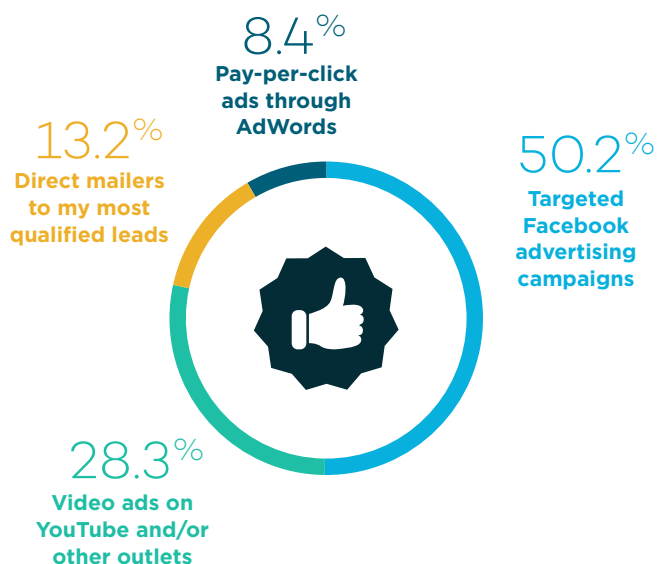


What this data means:

As noted, real estate lead generation remains a concerted focus for agents of just about all experience and skill levels and niches. In theory, the more leads you generate, the better off your business will be. If this is the avenue you choose to take for your lead gen efforts, just be sure you have a lead management system in place that can help you parse those prospects and determine which are nurture-worthy today versus those who are down the line.

“An ad channel I really want to use is . . .”

Survey responses: 244

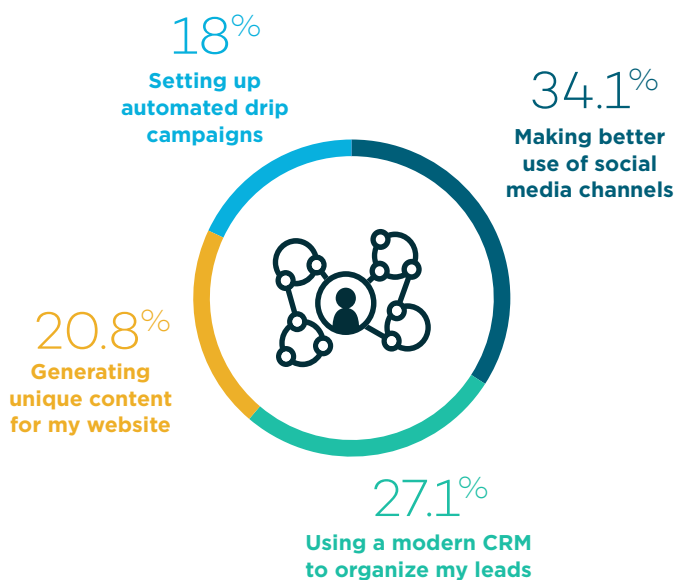


What this data means:

While it may take a month or two to perfect one's Facebook advertising campaigns, the potential results — leads who are extremely high-quality and, in many cases, ready to buy or sell ASAP — are fruitful. It's free to get set up with your Facebook for Business account, so play around with the ads platform if you haven't done so yet and determine if allocating some marketing dollars to paid ads is worth it for your particular agency.

“One activity I really want to try is . . .”

Survey responses: 242



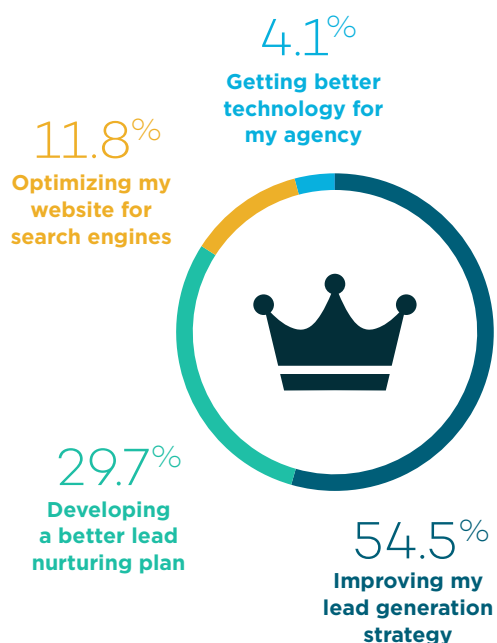
What this data means:

It's refreshing to see agents and brokers want to make use of the many social networks out there today other than Facebook. Instagram is a premier visual-heavy platform where you can share photos with clients and videos of listings. Pinterest is a fantastic place to share blog posts and buyer and seller resources. Even Snapchat can show you're a modern agent who likes to have fun and has a great personality. Try 'em all to see which work best for your marketing.



“My top online marketing priority is . . .”

Survey responses: 239



What this data means:

Once again, this is clear evidence agents want to better their lead generation efforts moving forward. Even if you were able to beat your own lead gen estimates for 2017, it may be worth it for you to revisit your approach and figure out what can be changed to get a better quality of leads in the digital door. For instance, think about how your lead capture forms trigger on your site (e.g. based on time on page, page visits, etc.) to improve your lead gen.





10 Top Takeaways From Our Survey

1. Agents and brokers recognize the value in spending money to make money.

You don't have to spend thousands of dollars to develop a "winning" real estate marketing strategy in this day and age. However, you do need to allocate a decent chunk of your marketing spend on worthwhile tactics and technology to better your business.

2. Generating top-tier leads remains the biggest challenge for real estate pros.

Obtaining high-quality real estate leads at an affordable cost remains the white whale for many industry pros, so it's no surprise many surveyed agents plan to place a renewed focus on generating better, cheaper home buyer and seller leads in 2018.

3. Video continues to rise in popularity among industry professionals nationwide.

If there's one marketing activity that many agents have grown fond of over the past handful of years, it would have to be video, which is what many polled real estate pros said they would be working with quite frequently during the course of 2018.

4. Facebook remains the premier social network for agents' online marketing.

While Instagram, Twitter, and other popular social media channels remain viable options for real estate pros, it's clear the overwhelming majority of industry members still prefer allocating most of their marketing efforts on social to the biggest channel.

5. Agents also want to learn how to better take advantage of other social channels.

Facebook may dominate the social media conversation among agents, but that doesn't mean the other major social outlets should be left alone. You may not earn many leads from non-Facebook channels. It's clear, though, agents aren't ready to give up on them.

6. Real estate pros want to incorporate mobile more into their marketing efforts.

Text alerts and nurturing strategies are all the rage among industry professionals throughout the country right now — and it's easy to see why. Texting is how most consumers prefer to communicate with one another — and brands — so why not join in?

7. Discovering how to optimize their websites is a major priority for agents in 2018.

Optimizing your website for your audience, search engines, and lead capture is how you'll grow your business at a hefty rate in 2018. So, be sure learn what your leads want to learn, turn those preferences into new site content, and add custom forms to those pages.

8. Many agents are beginning to understand the importance of in-depth site content.

Speaking of content, it seems more real estate agents are comprehending how crucial content can be for their digital presence — and bottom lines. If you've yet to really develop a comprehensive content plan for your agency, 2018 is the time to do so.

9. One of the biggest benefits of content is it can help you become a local expert.

Who doesn't want to be considered a local thought leader in one's market? After all, this is how many of today's top producers became top producers: by proving to their prospects they were and are the ultimate real estate/housing market resource.

10. All in all, agents appear willing to adapt to the times and modernize their strategies.

We're well past the turn of the century, when it wasn't necessary to have a robust digital presence. Nowadays, though, you need such a presence — and to continually improve it — so it's time to ... well ... get with the times and rededicate your efforts online.





Become a Top Producer in 2018

Download our exclusive guide today to learn how to earn your first \$1 million.

- Discover how to build a long-term business plan
- Find out which tech tools you need to succeed
- Learn how to build a modern marketing strategy
- See how you can step up your sales approach
- ... and get expert tips from today's top producers

Get your free copy today.

DOWNLOAD NOW

Online Marketing Trends for 2018

At the end of every calendar year, hundreds of modern marketers predict which tactics, techniques, and tools will become trendy the following year. From new technologies that will emerge to the latest multimedia plays for brands, these marketing professionals forecast what will become the must-use resources, apps, software solutions, and activities for businesses of all industries. With that in mind, let's take a look at some of the biggest and boldest online marketing projections for 2018.



Amy Balliett

Killer Infographics Owner and CEO

"Those [brands] that lead with inauthentic, cheap visual content will likely see a decrease in performance. Consumers have raised the bar and the marketers that step up will see great success in 2018."



Jonathan Gabay

Branding expert

"Thanks to a deeper understanding of digital psychology, marketers will become increasingly sophisticated in remaining responsive when delivering timely content, without appearing overly intrusive."



Heidi Cohen

Actionable Marketing Guide Chief Content Officer

"Your [email] subscribers are . . . a key element of your content marketing enabling you to communicate with them on a regular basis with non-promotional information. As a result, your house list is part of your business assets."



Neil Patel

Crazy Egg Co-founder

“Content marketing is moving beyond just blog ideas. There is a greater process you have to work toward in which ideas are constantly improved on, customized for different audiences, and adapted to new formats that consumers are using.”



Emily Collins

Forrester Senior Analyst

“2018 is the year that a select set of forward-looking marketers will begin the hard work of aligning their brand promise and their customer experience, changing the game for all.”



Joe Pulizzi

Content Marketing Institute Founder

“Most brands still treat their content marketing like advertising. For content marketing to truly work, it must be differentiated and consistently produced over a long time (like media companies do).”



Carolanne Mangles

Smart Insights Digital Marketing Executive

“Collecting data from your customers is important in constructing an accurate and detailed customer persona. Asking your audience to fill out surveys and questionnaires is the best way to find out.”



John Hall

Influence and Co. CEO and Co-founder

“Instead of just tracking what kind of content your competitors are developing or what they’re sharing on social media, you should also monitor their mentions and what people are saying — and use it as a metric to compare your performance.”

2018 Real Estate Market Forecast

Mortgage interest rates remain relatively low. Housing supply has ticked up in many regions. Consumer confidence is on the upswing as well. While these factors may not lead to a full-on revival of the U.S. housing market in 2018, there are still many reasons to believe the residential real estate industry will improve in the next calendar year. Here's what some of the smartest financial and housing experts had to say about the prospect of a strong 2018 for both agents and consumers.



Lawrence Yun

National Association of REALTORS® Chief Economist

"An overwhelming majority of renters want to own a home. . . Assuming there are no changes to the tax code that hurt homeownership, the gradually expanding economy and continued job creation should set the stage for a more meaningful increase in home sales in 2018."



Svenja Gudell

Zillow Chief Economist

"Escalating land and construction costs – along with zoning laws – make it prohibitive for builders to add affordable housing in cities near jobs, so they will look to the suburbs. As a result, that's where Millennials and first-time home buyers will flock for the greater variety of homes at relatively lower prices."



Sean Beckett

Freddie Mac Chief Economist

"The economic environment remains favorable for housing and mortgage markets. For several years, we have had moderate economic growth of about two percent a year, solid job gains, and low mortgage interest rates. We forecast those conditions to persist into next year."



Denise Supplee

SparkRental.com Co-founder and Operations Director

"Baby Boomers are holding onto their homes. Whether that's due to an increase in multigenerational living or modern medicine providing a higher quality of life, this is definitely a contributing factor to ongoing low home inventories."



Bob Simpson

Fannie Mae Multifamily VP of Affordable and Green Financing

"There continues to be the potential for corporate tax reform, which could have an impact on resyndication, mod-rehab, and new construction deals, but assuming what we know today, we think the size of that market will be pretty much the same."



Michael Fratantoni

Mortgage Bankers Association Chief Economist

"The job market remains strong, demographic trends are quite favorable, mortgage credit is becoming more available to qualified borrowers, and home prices should continue to rise. All the pieces are in place for stronger growth in 2018 and beyond."



Doug Duncan

Fannie Mae Chief Economist

"We expect economic activity to rebound in coming months. The recovery will likely be slower for home sales and home building, however, as the labor shortage and rising material prices will likely worsen after the hurricanes, exacerbating already-tight inventory."



PricewaterhouseCoopers

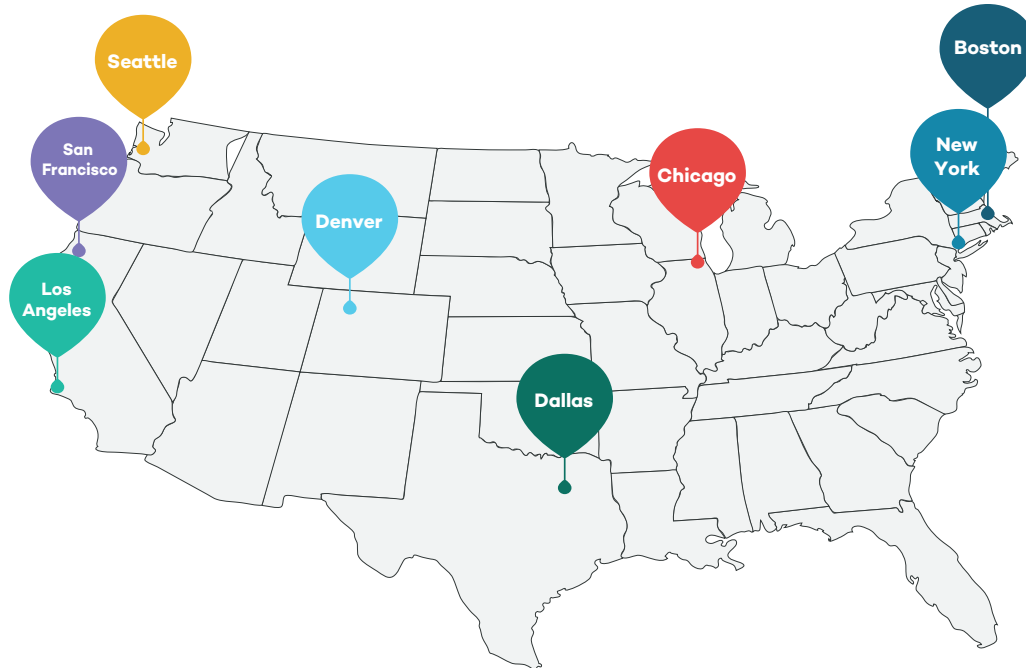
Emerging Trends in Real Estate report

"With . . . Baby Boomers remaining in their homes longer, the younger generations are meeting a housing shortage, an opportunity for homebuilders willing to scale product to their preferences — smaller and more energy-efficient homes, townhouses, condos, and 'affordable' starter homes."

The Hottest Housing Markets Of 2017

ANNUAL RATE OF EXISTING-HOME SALES (NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS)

Q1 2017: **5.62 Million**
Q2 2017: **5.57 Million**
Q3 2017: **5.40 Million**
Q4 2017 (Forecasted): **5.38 Million**
2017 (Forecasted): **5.47 Million**



Source: **Zillow, October 2017**

Boston

Median Home Value: **\$561,400**
Annual Home Value Change: **+9.3%**
Median Listing Price: **\$719,000**

New York

Median Home Value: **\$693,900**
Annual Home Value Change: **+14.3%**
Median Listing Price: **\$849,000**

San Francisco

Median Home Value: **\$1,236,700**
Annual Home Value Change: **+11.0%**
Median Listing Price: **\$1,195,000**

Los Angeles

Median Home Value: **\$633,400**
Annual Home Value Change: **+7.1%**
Median Listing Price: **\$745,000**

Denver

Median Home Value: **\$386,700**
Annual Home Value Change: **+7.8%**
Median Listing Price: **\$475,000**

Chicago

Median Home Value: **\$223,300**
Annual Home Value Change: **+7.3%**
Median Listing Price: **\$294,900**

Seattle

Median Home Value: **\$695,600**
Annual Home Value Change: **+14.6%**
Median Listing Price: **\$650,000**

Dallas

Median Home Value: **\$170,800**
Annual Home Value Change: **+8.9%**
Median Listing Price: **\$389,000**



Get a Placester demo today

Learn how Placester's marketing tools can improve your bottom line in 2018.

- Beautiful, mobile-friendly websites
- Custom lead capture forms
- MLS integration and listing pages
- Lead management and email tools
- Content library and site refreshes
- . . . and many more tools and services



Get in touch with us today.

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