

# SECTION 5: ONLINE MARKETING SYSTEMS

*When it's pouring rain and you're bowling along through the wet, there's satisfaction in knowing that you're out there and the others aren't.*

– Peter Snell, Olympic Gold Medal Winner

## **Social Media Strategy: Beyond Just Posting Listings**

Remember the neighbor who only knocks on your door when they're selling something? We all know one. They might be lovely people, but their visits always come with an agenda. Unfortunately, this is exactly how many real estate brokers approach social media – showing up only to announce their latest listing or brag about another sale.

The reality of social media in 2024 is both simpler and more nuanced than most brokers realize. It's not about broadcasting your success or becoming a viral sensation. Instead, think of social media as your virtual neighborhood – a place where you're a trusted community member first and a real estate professional second.

The most powerful social media presence isn't built on perfectly staged photos or carefully crafted marketing messages. It's built on something far more valuable: authentic connection. Consider this: when you're scrolling through your own feed, what makes you stop? It's usually the genuine moments – the behind-the-scenes glimpses, the honest reflections, the real stories that resonate with your own experiences.

Think of your social media strategy like hosting a great neighborhood block party. Your role isn't to stand on a soapbox with a megaphone announcing your services. Instead, you're creating spaces for conversation, sharing valuable information, and being an engaged community member. Sometimes you're leading the discussion, other times you're just participating, but you're always adding value.

Here's what this looks like in practice: Instead of just posting your latest listing, share the story behind it. Maybe it's the young couple who saved for five years to buy their first home, or the empty nesters downsizing to start their next adventure. These are the stories that make real estate human, that help people see beyond the transaction to the transformations happening in people's lives.

Three essential elements make social media work for real estate professionals:

- **Consistency in Presence:** Show up regularly, not just when you need something. This doesn't mean posting ten times a day – quality always trumps quantity.
- **Community Engagement:** Your market knowledge extends beyond real estate. Share updates about local events, celebrate community achievements, and be a source of valuable local information
- **Content Mix:** Balance your professional insights with personal touches. People work with brokers they know, like, and trust – and that requires showing different facets of who you are.

The biggest mistake brokers make on social media is trying to appear perfect. They edit out all the challenges, the setbacks, and the learning moments that make them relatable. But here's the truth: your potential clients aren't looking for perfection. They're looking for someone real, someone who understands their journey because they've walked similar paths.

Remember that time you accidentally locked yourself out during a showing? Or when the neighbor's dog photobombed your property video? These moments, shared with humor and authenticity, do more to build your brand than any polished marketing message ever could.

Your social media presence should feel like a continuation of the conversations you have every day with clients and neighbors. Share your expertise, absolutely, but do it in a way that invites dialogue rather than broadcasts authority. Instead of just telling followers about the hot market, share stories about how you're helping buyers navigate it. Rather than simply posting market statistics, explain what these numbers mean for local families.

Think of each platform as a different type of gathering:

- Facebook is your community bulletin board
- Instagram is your photo album and story collection
- LinkedIn is your professional networking event
- TikTok or YouTube are your chance to educate and entertain

The goal isn't to be everywhere, but to be consistently valuable wherever you choose to engage. Pick the platforms where your ideal clients spend their time and where you can show up authentically.

Success in social media isn't measured by follower counts or likes. The real measure is engagement – not just the clicks and comments, but the coffee meetings that result from online connections, the referrals that come because someone felt they already knew and trusted you through your content.

As we navigate social media together, remember that your greatest asset isn't your marketing budget or your content calendar – it's your authentic voice and genuine desire to serve your community. In a world of filtered perfection and automated posts, being genuinely human is your superpower.

After all, real estate isn't just about properties – it's about people. And social media, at its best, is simply another way to connect with those people, share their stories, and be part of their journey home.

### **Key Technologies**

Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube, Tiktok

## **The Danger of the Generic Real Estate Website**

When most real estate brokers think about their online presence, they often envision a sleek, professional website that automatically generates leads while they sleep. The major brokerages fuel this dream, offering turnkey website solutions as part of their recruitment packages. "Join us," they say, "and we'll give you everything you need to succeed online!"

But here's the uncomfortable truth that no one talks about: in the rush to automate and simplify, we've created an ocean of identical websites. It's as if thousands of brokers showed up to the same party wearing exactly the same outfit – not exactly the way to stand out in a crowd.

The reality of effective real estate websites in 2024 is both simpler and more challenging than these templated solutions suggest. You won't need complex programming knowledge or expensive custom design, but you will need something far more valuable: your authentic self.

Think of your website not as a digital business card, but as your virtual handshake. In the physical world, you'd never send a robot or a cardboard cutout to meet potential clients. Yet that's exactly what we do when we hide behind generic house photos and cliché real estate phrases.

The most crucial moment in any website visit happens in less than a second – that's how long it takes for a visitor to decide whether to stay or go. In that brief instant, you need to create a human connection. This is why the first thing visitors should see is your smiling face, not a stock photo of a house. Remember: people buy from people, not properties.

Your website needs to answer three fundamental questions:

- Who are you as a real estate professional?
- What makes your approach unique?
- Why should someone trust you with possibly the biggest transaction of their life?

The biggest trap in real estate marketing is trying to be everything to everyone. It's like being a restaurant that simply advertises "food" – technically accurate, but not very compelling. Instead, your website should clearly communicate your specialty, whether that's helping first-time homebuyers navigate the market, guiding investors through commercial properties, or finding the perfect vacation home for busy professionals.

The secret to standing out online isn't about having the fanciest technology or the most automated systems. It's about creating genuine human connections through your digital presence. Share your story, showcase your community involvement, and demonstrate your expertise in ways that relate to your ideal clients' needs and concerns.

Think of your website content like a conversation at a coffee shop. You wouldn't start by listing all your awards and sales statistics. Instead, you'd probably share stories about helping people find their dream homes, explain your approach to solving common real estate challenges, and demonstrate your deep knowledge of the local market.

As we explore website optimization together, remember that we're not trying to create the most technologically advanced website – we're trying to create the most effective one. The goal isn't to impress visitors with bells and whistles, but to build trust and establish connections that lead to lasting relationships.

Consider this: If you removed your name from your website, would it still be uniquely yours? Would someone who knows you recognize your voice, your values, and your approach to real estate? If not, it's time to inject more of your personality into your digital presence.

Remember, in a world where automation and templates are making everything look the same, your unique perspective and authentic personality are your greatest assets. Don't hide them behind generic website elements – let them shine through in every aspect of your online presence.

The most successful real estate websites don't just display properties – they tell stories, build connections, and create trust. And that's something no template can provide out of the box.

How do you know if your website is working? It's not just about traffic numbers or lead generation metrics. The real measure of success is whether your website visitors feel like they've met the real you, and whether they're inspired to take the next step in building a relationship with you as their trusted real estate advisor.

### **Key Technologies**

IDX Feed on your website

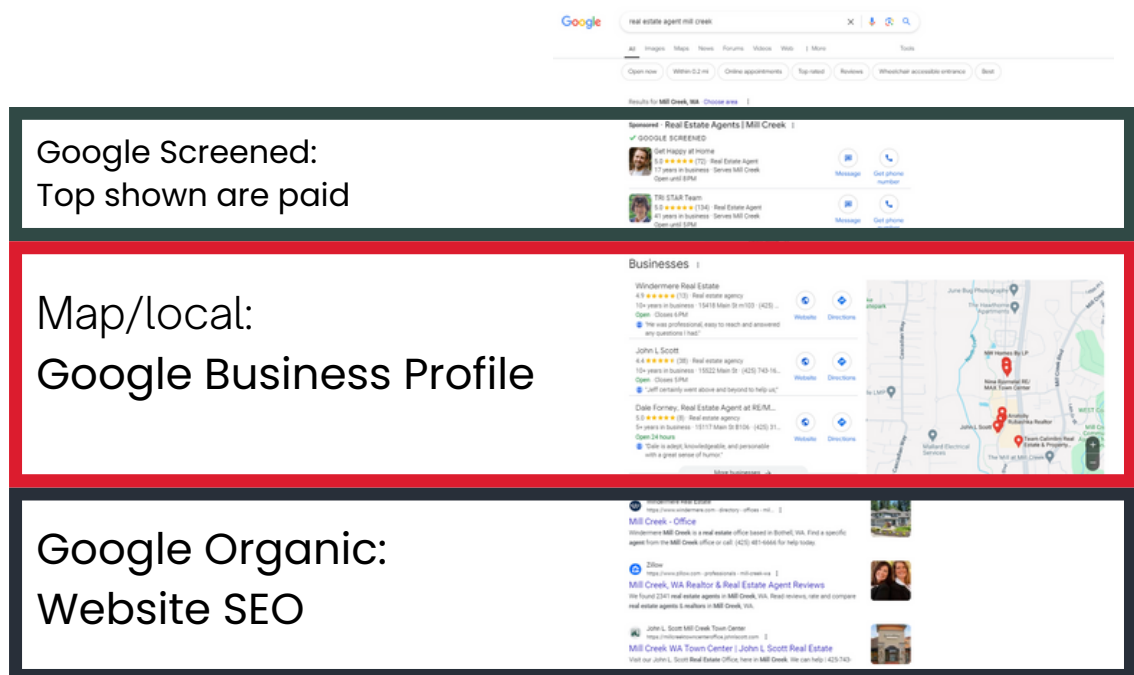
Vendors – Many of the CRM systems offer an integrated website, like BoldTrail, Follow-up Boss, Buffini Referral Maker

## Google Business Profile: Your 24/7 Digital Open House

Let's talk about the 800-pound gorilla in the room - Google. You know, that little search engine that's become so ubiquitous that it's turned into a verb. "Let me Google that" has become as common as "pass the salt" at dinner.

Here's a mind-bending statistic for you: Google processes over 3.5 billion searches PER DAY. That's about 40,000 searches every second! And you know what? Some of those searches are from people looking for their next real estate broker. Wouldn't it be nice if they found you?

Enter the Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) - your digital storefront on the world's busiest street. Think of it as your 24/7 billboard that shows up exactly when and where people are looking for real estate brokers.



Here's what you need to know to make your Google Business Profile work harder than a caffeinated squirrel:

### Name Drop Like a Pro

- Make sure "Real Estate Broker" or "Realtor" (if a member of the National Association of Realtors) is in your business name
- Include your brokerage name (it's not just compliance - it's good business!)
- Think about what people actually type when they're searching

## Complete ALL the Things

- Fill out every. single. field.
- Add your services (yes, even the obvious ones)
- Keep your hours and contact info current
- Post regular updates (if it goes on Facebook, it should go here too)

The Review Game...Here's the secret sauce - Google LOVES reviews. They want to be the Yelp of everything, and they're not subtle about it. Reviews aren't just nice to have; they're like digital gold for your visibility.

Who can write reviews? Pretty much anyone who knows you professionally:

- Past clients (obviously)
- Vendors you've worked with
- Other brokers you've done deals with
- That mortgage broker who thinks you're awesome
- Even your hairdresser who's known you for years

And if you're new? Get creative! Anyone who can vouch for your character and work ethic is fair game. The review doesn't have to be about a real estate transaction - it can focus on your professionalism, reliability, and trustworthiness.

Remember: Your Google Business Profile is like a garden - it needs regular tending to flourish. Post photos, respond to reviews, add updates about your business. The more love you give it, the more love Google will give you back.

Think of it this way: If you had a storefront on Main Street, you wouldn't leave the windows dusty and the sign falling off, would you? Your Google Business Profile is your digital storefront - and millions of people are walking by every day.

So get out there and make Google work for you. Because when someone in your area types "best real estate broker near me" at 11 PM while sitting in their pajamas, don't you want to be the one they find?

## **Key Technology**

Google Business Profile at [www.business.google.com](http://www.business.google.com)



# ONLINE MARKETING QUIZ

Fill in the blanks to test your knowledge of effective digital marketing strategies for real estate professionals:

1. When using social media for real estate, think of it as your virtual \_\_\_\_\_, where you're a trusted community member first and a real estate professional second.
2. The most powerful social media presence isn't built on perfectly staged photos, but on something far more valuable: authentic \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Three essential elements make social media work for real estate professionals: Consistency in Presence, Community Engagement, and Content \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The biggest mistake brokers make on social media is trying to appear \_\_\_\_\_, when clients are actually looking for someone real and relatable.
5. Think of Facebook as your community bulletin board, Instagram as your photo album, LinkedIn as your professional networking event, and TikTok or YouTube as your chance to \_\_\_\_\_ and entertain.
6. The most crucial moment in any website visit happens in less than a \_\_\_\_\_ - that's how long it takes for a visitor to decide whether to stay or go.
7. The first thing visitors should see on your website is your \_\_\_\_\_, not a stock photo of a house.
8. Your website needs to answer three fundamental questions: Who are you as a real estate professional? What makes your approach unique? And why should someone \_\_\_\_\_ you with possibly the biggest transaction of their life?
9. Google processes over \_\_\_\_\_ searches PER DAY, and some of those searches are from people looking for their next real estate broker.
10. Reviews on your Google Business Profile aren't just nice to have; they're like digital \_\_\_\_\_ for your visibility.

Words to use to fill in the blanks: gold, trust, perfect, Mix, second, educate, neighborhood, connection, smiling face, 3.5 billion



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Many real estate agents approach social media like "the neighbor who only knocks on your door when they're selling something." How might this transactional approach impact an agent's long-term success compared to those who build authentic relationships first? What specific content strategies could agents with limited marketing experience implement to create genuine connections rather than just broadcasting listings and sales accomplishments?

In the rush to automate and simplify, many agents end up with websites that look identical to thousands of others - "like showing up to the same party wearing exactly the same outfit." What specific elements would you incorporate into your website to reflect your authentic self rather than relying on generic templates? How would you measure whether these personalization efforts are actually resonating with potential clients?

Google processes over 3.5 billion searches per day, making your Google Business Profile your "digital storefront on the world's busiest street." Beyond completing your profile and gathering reviews, what creative approaches might you use to stand out in local search results? How could you integrate your Google Business presence with your other marketing channels to create a cohesive digital strategy?