2014

REAL ESTATE
BUSINESS PLAN
FOR REAL ESTATE BROKERS

Accelerate your profits
Assess agent productivity
Focus efforts for agent recruitment and retention
Enable agents to sell more homes
Free worksheets inside!

market leader.
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   featuring Jed Kolko, Chief Economist at Trulia

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   Agent Recruitment and Retention
   Agent Productivity
   Marketing / Branding

MARKET LEADER’S BROKER PROFITABILITY ACCELERATION
CALCULATOR  LEAD GENERATION
   Lead Engagement
   Marketing / Branding
   Referrals
As a real estate broker, your reputation depends on your knowledge of the market and the expertise you and your agents can offer your clients. That’s why, as you start to plan for how you’re going to grow your business in 2014, it’s important to have your finger on the pulse of the current market, and also know what to expect in the coming year.

Armed with this knowledge, you’ll be equipped to support your agents to become more productive while closing more sales.

In September of 2013, Market Leader talked to Jed Kolko, Chief Economist at Trulia, about the state of the current market and where he thinks we’re headed in 2014. While we don’t have a crystal ball, we can offer industry-leading expertise to help brokers like you plan for success next year.

**WILL THE MARKET CONTINUE ITS CURRENT PACE TOWARD RECOVERY?**

“We’ve seen that prices are still rising, inventory is still tight, and mortgage rates are still very low,” Kolko says. “But, they’re all moving a bit more back to long-term, pre-bubble levels.”

What are those pre-bubble levels? According to the National Association of Realtors®, home sales are at their highest pace since February 2007, when they hit 5.79 million, and they have remained above year-ago levels for the past 26 months.

**What to expect in 2014** - Expect the market to continue to pick up speed as the economy improves and more owners decide that they have built enough equity to sell their homes. “It will probably be more expensive to buy a home next year than this year, due to higher rates and higher prices,” Kolko says. “But, there will be more inventory
to choose from and it will be easier to get a loan.” This is good news for real estate professionals. As home prices rise, more sellers will jump into the market and less restrictive loans will allow more buyers to attain financing.

**WHAT ABOUT SELLERS IN THE MARKET?**

With inventory still tight, buyers are often finding themselves in multiple offer situations, as many would-be sellers are still waiting to cash in on increased equity.

According to a survey from Trulia and Harris Interactive conducted in June 2013, buyers in cities that saw the fastest recoveries are worried about the competition they face with other buyers as well as the need to make a quick decision to avoid missing out on a home.

**WHAT’S GOING ON WITH FORECLOSURES AND SHORT SALES?**

“At this point, in most of the country, the foreclosure crisis is behind us,” Kolko says. The only places where foreclosures still make up a large part of the market are judicial states, where foreclosure processing can take upwards of three years.

**What to expect in 2014** - “Sales volumes are increasing,” Kolko says. “And not only are sales increasing, but we’re seeing a shift from foreclosures and short sales to conventional sales. That’s a sign of a returning market.”

**HOW WILL THE OVERALL ECONOMY AFFECT THE REAL ESTATE MARKET?**

While the economy and the job market continue to improve as we wrap up 2013, industry experts are looking at 2014 to finally be able to declare that the market has completely recovered.

**What to expect in 2014** - Kolko predicts that, as banks have less demand for refinancing, they’ll have more money available for new mortgages, freeing up some of the “credit crunch” of the last few years. However, interest rates are expected to rise steadily over the next year. And, Kolko cautions that there is still much uncertainty about new lending regulations that will go into effect in 2014.

**WILL HOME PRICES CONTINUE TO RISE?**

The parts of the country that experienced the biggest price rebounds in 2013, like Las Vegas, California, and other parts of the West, are starting to see a slowdown in price gains.

**What to expect in 2014** - Sellers in areas where price gains are slowing may see the momentum shift as a good time to put their home on the market and buy a new property while interest rates remain low and the economy continues to recover. Other parts of the country that haven’t yet experienced a large rebound may see it in 2014. For agents in the Northeast and the South this could bring a lot more opportunity.
IS THE NEW CONSTRUCTION MARKET RETURNING TO NORMAL?

While the existing home market is now running close to long-term normal, the new construction market remains at about half of normal levels. Why? There are few new households being formed, as young adults aren’t finding the consistent employment they need to move out and live on their own. Plus, there are an above-normal number of vacant homes still around.

What to expect in 2014 - “Until the overall economy recovers enough that more young adults get jobs, move out of their parents’ house, and form households, we won’t get up to normal construction levels,” Kolko says.

HOW DOES AFFORDABILITY AFFECT MY AGENTS AND THEIR CLIENTS?

As the economy recovers, both buyers and sellers are seeing an increase in home prices. As first-time homebuyers see prices rapidly increasing, buying a home becomes less affordable. “For first-time buyers, they’re watching the prices go up on the homes they want to buy, but they’re no richer because they don’t own a home that’s also gone up in value,” Kolko says.

According to the Trulia and Harris Interactive poll, 38% of potential buyers who are planning on buying in the next 12 months are worried that home prices will rise before they’re ready to buy.

What to expect in 2014 - Kolko sees a lot of potential in the move-up market, meaning people who are buying a home but also selling a home, because they can take advantage of price increases that have already happened. Recent research from Market Leader and Hebert Research shows that almost half of today’s buyers are also sellers.

GET STARTED!

With increasing inventory, a more balanced market, and loosening credit, 2014 might just be the best opportunity you’ve had in years to effectively grow your business. Now, you just need a plan to get there...
STEP 1: MAP OUT YOUR BUSINESS MODEL

Now that you know what to expect in the coming year, you’re ready to develop your business plan.

First, you’ll want to set a gross commission Income goal for your brokerage. Decide how much money you want to make from your brokerage in 2014.

Once you have your goal marked in permanent ink on your forehead, it's time to create your plan.

STEP 1 – MAP YOUR BROKERAGE BUSINESS MODEL
STEP 2 - GROW YOUR LEAD PIPELINE
STEP 3 - KNOW WHICH AREAS YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON
STEP 4 - AGENT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND PRODUCTIVITY

As a real estate broker, you manage a team of professionals that helps your business grow. Giving your team the tools and resources to support your brand and win customers is critical. Mapping the essential elements of your business model will help accelerate your growth and profitability. Once you understand all the pieces that make up your business model, you’ll know the value of what you provide and the revenue you need to generate in order to profit.

Start by mapping out your business model using the grid below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. KEY PARTNERSHIPS</th>
<th>(Example: local MLS, referral channels)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is essential in helping you drive your business?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. KEY ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>(Example: ongoing lead generation, online advertising, community events, social media)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What you must do in order to perform well?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. KEY TOOLS</th>
<th>(Example: website with MLS/IDX, CRM, marketing platform)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What essential tools are needed to operate your business?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. BROKER VALUE PROPOSITION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why should your target customers do business with you? What makes your business unique?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E. KEY MARKETING CHANNELS</th>
<th>(Example: website, social media, email, listing alerts, referral program, newsletter)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What methods do you use to market your broker business to drive leads for your agents?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F. KEY MARKETING TACTICS</th>
<th>(Example: website blog, email newsletter, Facebook page, Craigslist, referrals, public speaking, online advertising)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are all the ways in which you generate new business?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G. KEY CUSTOMER SEGMENTS</th>
<th>(Example: high-income, retirees, families, military)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What types of consumers does your business provide value for?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H. COST STRUCTURE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking at the boxes above, identify the yearly costs associated with each item, if any, and list them in order of most expensive to least expensive. Add them up. This is the cost of operating your business.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Example:  
Advertising = $5,000  
MLS-IDX = $?  
Print shop = $1,200  
Total = $9,200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. REVENUE STREAM</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the number of transactions your business generates each year from your agents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Example:  
100 leads per month  
200 leads per month  
300 leads per month  
400+ leads per month  
1 closing per agent per month  
2 closings per agent per month  
3 closings per agent per month)
**STEP 2: STEPS TO GROWING LEAD PIPELINES**

Take the real estate strength test below. You'll be able to see how you rank compared to other successful real estate brokers, and identify your key areas for improvement in 2014.

**Instructions:**
Read each question and check the box if it applies to you. When you are done, add up the points next to each checked box and put them in the “Your Total” box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAD GENERATION</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My agents generate at least 1 referral each month</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My agents receive 3 or more referrals each month</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our website generates leads consistently each month</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We generate leads from online sources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We receive leads from 3rd party providers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We use print marketing to generate new leads</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We use online advertising to drive consumers to the website</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our agents add between 1 and 10 leads to their respective pipelines each month</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our agents add between 11 and 20 leads to their respective pipelines each month</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our agents add between 21 - 30 leads to their pipelines each month</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our agents add more than 30 leads to their pipelines each month</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

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### LEAD ENGAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New leads receive a response within one hour of receiving their contact info</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLS listings are sent to leads</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active leads and clients are provided relevant and helpful information regularly</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one communication per month is sent to expired leads and past clients</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers can browse my website for listings, neighborhood data and other helpful resources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All leads and contacts are kept in one CRM (contact management) system</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM is accessible from agent smartphones</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM drives leads back to my website</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM knows when leads are utilizing my website</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM automates communications with leads and past clients</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM sends an alert when new leads enter the pipeline</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRM and website are synced together</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

### MARKETING/BRANDING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I do a web search for homes in my area, my website is easily found</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I send printed mailers to my targeted areas and neighborhoods</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I write at least one real estate blog post per month</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I post YouTube videos to promote my expertise and knowledge of my local area</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents connect with clients and past clients on Facebook or other social media channel</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agents participate in local events, community associations, and organizations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In all my marketing, I make sure to channel responders back to my website</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**
There is a concerted effort to meet new people and grow our sphere of influence – – – – – – – 10
Automated emails are used to stay in touch with past clients – – – – – – – – – – – 15
Gentle reminders are sent to past clients informing them of changes in their homes value – – – – – – – 10
I connect with and engage past clients on social media – – – – – – – – – – – 5
Past clients are sent polite requests for referrals – – – – – – – – – – – 5
All clients are added to a newsletter delivered at least once per month – – – – – – – – – – – 5

TOTAL

We are continually recruiting for the best agent talent – – – – – – – – – – – 10
We only recruit when we need agents – – – – – – – – – – – 3
Our typical agent commission is $2-3,000 – – – – – – – – – – – 3
Our typical agent commission is $3-5,000 – – – – – – – – – – – 5

TOTAL
ANALYZE YOUR RESULTS

Take a look at your results in each of the major business areas and compare them with brokers whose agents average 10 or more transactions per year. Go back and identify the areas where you can make the biggest improvements. Start with the highest point value items and work backwards from there.

LEAD GENERATION

Successful broker score = 70+
Top brokers make lead generation a primary focus in their daily business activities. They know that a consistent flow of leads into their pipeline is the only way they are going to generate more sales and referrals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Write your Lead Generation score here.</th>
<th>B. Subtract your total in Box A from 70 and write it here.</th>
<th>C. Go back to the test sheet and identify the top areas you need to improve. Write them here along with their point value.</th>
<th>D. Add up the areas you want to improve from Box C. It should equal or exceed Box B.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Need help generating more leads? Click here: [http://marketleader.com/get-real-estate-leads](http://marketleader.com/get-real-estate-leads)

LEAD ENGAGEMENT

Successful broker score = 60+
There’s no point in generating leads if you don’t have an engagement strategy that is aligned with the consumers buying process. Today’s top brokers are using technology to help them engage their leads and identify the best opportunities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Write your Lead Generation score here.</th>
<th>B. Subtract your total in Box A from 60 and write it here.</th>
<th>C. Go back to the test sheet and identify the top areas you need to improve. Write them here along with their point value.</th>
<th>D. Add up the areas you want to improve from Box C. It should equal or exceed Box B.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

Need tips to improve your lead engagement? Click here: [http://marketleader.com/marketing-center](http://marketleader.com/marketing-center)
**MARKETING/BRANDING**

*Successful broker score = 30+*

How can your agents sell if consumers can't find you? When consumers do finally find you, how do they know you’re the best choice for them? Marketing and branding are essential, not only for generating leads, but for making sure leads choose your brokerage and not the one next door.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Write your Lead Generation score here.</th>
<th>B. Subtract your total in Box A from 30 and write it here.</th>
<th>C. Go back to the test sheet and identify the top areas you need to improve. Write them here along with their point value.</th>
<th>D. Add up the areas you want to improve from Box C. It should equal or exceed Box B.</th>
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</table>


**REFERRALS**

*Successful broker score = 30+*

Your agents can't have referrals without a dedicated effort toward meeting new people and promoting your brand. Top brokers make sure agents are focused on staying top of mind in their community. Most importantly, brokers make sure their agents maintain contact and a positive relationship with past clients. The chance of closing a referral is much greater than standard leads, but they are much harder to attain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Write your Lead Generation score here.</th>
<th>B. Subtract your total in Box A from 30 and write it here.</th>
<th>C. Go back to the test sheet and identify the top areas you need to improve. Write them here along with their point value.</th>
<th>D. Add up the areas you want to improve from Box C. It should equal or exceed Box B.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Learn how to generate more referrals. Click here [http://marketleader.com/get-real-estate-leads](http://marketleader.com/get-real-estate-leads)

**AGENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

*Successful broker score = 15+*

To grow your business, it’s crucial that you attract the best real estate agents and keep them satisfied with the tools they need to maximize leads, boost client engagement, and close more sales. A strong team foundation can make or break your brokerage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Write your Recruit and Retention score here</th>
<th>B. Subtract your total in Box A from 15 and write it here.</th>
<th>C. Go back to test sheet and identify the top areas you need to improve. Write them here along with their point value.</th>
<th>D. Add up the areas you want to improve from Box C. It should equal or exceed Box B.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Learn how to improve agent recruitment and retention. Click here
### REAL ESTATE BROKER LEAD GENERATION DOS & DON’TS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DON’T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Make sure your Brokerage Online Store (your website) is set up for lead generation  
- Consumer focused, not agent focused  
- True IDX feed  
- Updated and accurate community information  
- Value proposition lead-capture tool  
- Mobile technology capable  
- Integrated with your CRM  
**Take advantage of multiple sources of lead sources**  
- National real estate sites  
- Craigslist  
- Social media  
- Your sphere of influence  
**And the major search engines including…**  
- Google  
- Yahoo  
- Bing  
- AOL  
- Ask.com  
**Be very efficient online**  
- Have a consumer-focused website  
- Short and concise messaging  
- Provide instant gratification  
- Include calls to action and relevant content on your website | **Underestimate the time commitment of lead generation**  
Make sure to consider the amount of time as well as cost of the lead generation sources.  
**Disappoint the consumer**  
Make sure your brokerage website provides the information consumers are looking for and ensure agents respond quickly to registrations.  
**Give up on leads if they aren’t ready to buy or sell right away**  
- Home buyer and seller timelines can be as long as 2 years  
- Ensure agents use CRM to nurture them  
- Learn more about the home buying process and how to communicate you’re your leads  
http://marketleader.com/journey/ |
BROKER LEAD ENGAGEMENT
CHECKLIST

BE FOUND ONLINE

✓ Have a website that gives the leads a reason to return
  • Have a website that gives the leads a reason to return
  • Up-to-date home listings
  • High-resolution (easy to see) property photos
  • Easy navigation
  • Neighborhood information
  • Local housing market data
  • Connected with CRM to know which leads are doing what on your site

✓ Agents have a CRM that is…
  • Regularly utilized by all agents
  • Contains all leads and contacts
  • Accessible from smartphone
  • Identifies which leads are on your site
  • Automates communication with leads and past clients
  • Alerts agents when they get a new lead
  • Includes email marketing
  • Integrated with the broker website
Ensure agents respond quickly
- Respond to every lead within an hour of receiving their contact info
- Respond to every email or phone call message within an hour
- Turn off automated communication when you get responses and respond directly to their email or phone call

Match email to leads
- Segment leads based on interest and timeframe
- Customize your communications to meet the leads’ specific need
  - Ideas:
    - Listings alerts that meet the leads’ search criteria
    - Home buying guide to the first-time home buyer leads
    - Home staging ideas to potential sellers
- Send automated MLS listings alerts that meet your leads’ search criteria
- Don’t reach out just to reach out, make sure all communication have value to your leads
- Include links back to your website in all emails

Don’t let leads fall through the cracks
- Drive leads back to the broker website
- Provide relevant and helpful information to active leads and clients
- Send at least one communication per month to inactive leads and past clients
- Ideas for monthly broker newsletter
  - Trends in interest rate, home values, or neighborhood stats
  - Festival, concerts, or other interesting happenings in your area
  - Home buying tips
  - Home décor tips
  - Interesting local listings
  - Add something fun—a cartoon, game, or silly picture can express your personality in your newsletter

Have a website for the area your brokerage covers, which includes:
- MLS listings of homes
- Neighborhood housing market data
- Unique content about you and your neighborhood
- Lead capture
- CRM to follow up with leads
Create a hyper-local blog and write interesting, useful neighborhood information posts. This content if unique and done well can be SEO gold.

- Post videos
  - Interview local experts
  - Community Tours
  - Preview hot new listings
- Written posts
  - History of the area
  - Great places to eat, get happy hour
  - Interesting residents
- Include photos with posts
  - Restaurants or merchants
  - Interesting local architecture
  - Historic Homes
  - Local sports teams
- Resource posts
  - Utility and cable company information
  - Local bus or transit information
  - Libraries, parks, or recreational facilities
  - Map of schools
- Neighborhood housing market info
  - Monthly snapshot report with valuable content for residents and potential residents

Connect with past and current clients via social media

Create a neighborhood Facebook page

Social media channels link back to your website
  - Facebook

Twitter
  - YouTube
  - LinkedIn
  - Google+
  - Other

BE FOUND OFFLINE

Send targeted mailers with brokerage website

Broker Branding through Community Engagement

Connect with past and current clients via social media

Create a neighborhood Facebook page

Social media channels link back to your website
  - Facebook
Agents get referrals by providing a positive buying and selling experience with excellent customer service.

- Agents respond promptly to phone calls and emails
- Agents determine and use the clients preferred method of contact
- Agents are a resource with expert knowledge to educate and help educate clients on the home buying or selling process
  - Be a glossary, help them understand all the real estate terms
  - Familiarize them with the paperwork
  - Introduce them to the people involved in the transaction
- Agents actively listen to your clients

✔Once your agents have provided customers with excellent customer service, make sure they have the tools to stay in top of mind.

- Have a CRM database
- Each agent actively keeps contacts up to date in the broker CRM (including past, current, and sphere of influence contacts)
- Agents stay in touch with past clients with drip campaigns
- Ideas of drip campaigns types to use:
  - Newsletters
  - Local market information updates
  - Birthday, anniversary, new baby and other greetings

✔More ideas to stay top of mind

- Friend/ follow current and past clients on social media
- Broker presence on Facebook
- Broker presence on YouTube
- Active blogging from the agents on their own sites or the broker blog
- An annual event for past clients

✔Build broker relationships with industry colleagues such as:

- Title companies
- Escrow people
- Lenders
- Contractors
- Plumbers
- Home inspectors
- Electricians

✔Agent referral and training

Regularly provide ideas for agents to ask for referrals and set up a referral rewards program.
PREPARE TO SELL MORE HOMES!

By now you should feel very optimistic about the coming year. By completing the 2014 Business Plan, you should have a better understanding of your business model and the areas you need to improve. Make sure you stay motivated and focused on your goals, and you'll be able to capitalize on all the opportunities brought on by the continued momentum of the real estate market.

ABOUT MARKET LEADER

To thrive in the ever-changing real estate market, you need the tools to effectively generate, manage, and close more transactions than your competitors—while aligning your strategies with the way today's consumers shop for homes. Market Leader's complete lead-to-close solution is your platform for success!

Market Leader is an industry leader, providing innovative online technology and marketing solutions for real estate professionals across the United States and Canada. Since 1999, we've helped real estate professionals succeed and grow, and today serve more than 135,000 agents, brokerages, and franchises with products designed to take their businesses further.

In August 2013, Trulia, the leading real estate marketplace for consumers and real estate professionals, completed the acquisition of Market Leader.

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