THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO

WEBSITES

For Real Estate Professionals

What's Inside:

- What your website doesn’t have that you need
- How to get more visitors
- Why Analytics is important
- Ways to keep leads coming back to your website

market leader.
# Table of Contents

4 Must-Haves for a Great Real Estate Site .................................................. 3  
Does Your Website Capture Leads or Let Them Get Away? ............................ 6  
What is IDX and How can it Help Generate Leads? ..................................... 9  
How to Keep Customers Engaged on Your Website .................................... 12  

Search Engine Optimization
- Organic Traffic Isn’t Free: Beginner SEO Tips for Agents .......................... 15  
- How to Write Engaging Content for Search Engines .................................. 18  

Why Your Web Domain is Important (and Why It’s Not) ............................ 21  
Why Real Estate Pros Should Pay Attention to Website Analytics .................. 23  
Keep your Leads Coming Back to Your Website ....................................... 25
4 Must-Haves for a Great Real Estate Site

It seems like some websites have it all figured out—sophisticated design, compelling text, simple but effective lead conversion, visually-pleasing listings, and plenty of new content. Admiring these features can lead one to ask...

*Is there a magical “it” factor for real estate websites?*

*How can I make my website more effective?*

*What if I don’t have a background in web marketing?*

If any of these thoughts have ever crossed your mind, you’re not alone. Having a great real estate website with lead capture technology is becoming more important to your success with every passing day. Every time a potential new customer goes online to search for a home or find a new agent, you have the chance to capture a new lead. Having a great lead capture website translates into having more money in your pocket.

There are four main real estate website components that, when used together, help agents generate more business:

1. **A great first impression that aligns with today’s consumer**

When designing your website, it’s important to keep your customers
in mind. Your site should be designed to reflect their needs, not your own. Today’s online consumers have short attention spans, want information at their fingertips, and require that information to be delivered in an intuitive, straightforward, and visually-pleasing way.

- **Engage your site visitors from the second they arrive on your site.** Let’s be honest: most people visiting your site are looking for listings. Don’t miss an opportunity to grab them on the home page. Make your listings show up front-and-center.

- **Resist the temptation to have ads on your website.** Your number-one priority should be your potential customers. Ads only distract from and cheapen the online experience.

- **Make sure that every page has a clear call-to-action.** Be transparent with viewers about what you want them to do on each page, whether it’s browsing through new listings, filling out a form, or clicking through to your social media sites.

### 2. A seamless lead capture tool

Current and future clients will register on your site in order to gain access to current listings. However, there’s more to the lead capture process than just having potential customers fill out a registration form.

- **Prompt your visitors to register**, but keep the form simple. The more you ask of the visitor the more likely they will leave and find it elsewhere, so only ask for information that’s really necessary.

- In the wording of your website and on the form, **focus on the benefits that visitors will get by signing up** (access to more complete listing information, email notifications of new listings, etc.), instead of the features of the site.

- **Ensure that immediately after signing up; visitors to your site have access to listings.** If not, they’ll just find the information they’re looking for elsewhere.

### 3. Up-to-date real estate information

Having informative, recent, valuable information on your website not only gives visitors a reason to register, but it also positions you as the expert in your area.

- **Make yourself an invaluable resource in your local area and provide the information people are looking for:** frequently asked questions about local...
neighborhoods, school district data, market analysis, zip code comparisons, how-to videos, testimonials, webinars, and links to more information.

- **Pictures, pictures, pictures.** Make sure you have large, colorful pictures (or videos!) of your current listings.
- **Load new listings as quickly as possible.** When you display accurate, up-to-date listings, your site becomes a prospect’s number one resource for real estate information.

### 4. An integrated contact management system

Your time as a real estate professional is priceless. It is best spent working with your customers to close deals, not wading through a disorganized contact management system or doing double-duty manually inputting new leads into a stand-alone system.

**Choose a lead capture system that is integrated with your website and its lead capture tools.** An integrated contact management system ensures that not only do you have contact information for every lead that has registered on your site, but you also know what kind of homes they are searching for, at what time of the day, and when they’re ready to become active potential buyers.

A great integrated contact management system will help turn leads to clients. Set up your system so when a potential new client completes the lead capture form on your website, they can start receiving pre-set welcome emails, new listing alerts, marketing materials, and other touch points that you choose.

A great website helps you find potential new clients, converts them into clients, gives them great information, positions you as the industry expert, and keeps them coming back for more. Invest the time and resources necessary to make your real estate website the envy of your competitors everywhere.
Does Your Website Capture Leads or Let Them Get Away?

Don’t let this happen to you. An agent decides to get involved with online lead generation. He creates online advertisements with Facebook, Craigslist, and Google Adwords in an attempt to direct traffic to his site. However, after spending much time and money on these ads, the agent has no leads to show for it and blames these sources for providing low-quality traffic. In reality, this agent’s lead generation woes are just as likely to be from having a website that is poorly designed for capturing leads as they are from poorly performing ad campaigns.

Getting visitors to your site is only half the battle of online advertising. If your website does not convert even the highest quality visitors to leads, your online lead generation efforts are doomed to failure. Your website needs to both engage your visitors with the information they are looking for and ask for their contact information so you can reach out and turn them into clients.

Give the Visitors What They Want

Your website needs engaging content if you want visitors to stay and not bounce back to search engine results – or other real estate sites! Let us clue you in on what types of content consumers are apt to get engaged with.
Homebuyers conducting their home search online want to look at listings, specifically listing photos. Home sellers want to find out what their home is worth and look at listings to find a new home.

If your website does not have listings – or listing photos – you are not giving online home searchers the content they’re looking for. They do not want to spend time on your website’s home page, “About me” page, or “Contact me” page. It may be a blow to some agents’ egos, but homebuyers’ number one priority is to look at listings and listing photos – not learn about you! Give consumers what they want, and make sure your online lead generation efforts link to those pages. Direct them to any other page and you run the risk of your would-be leads bouncing back to search engine results or to other agents’ sites.

Ask for Their Contact Information

For agents who get all of their business from referrals, and whose websites are only visited by consumers they’ve already spoken with, asking visitors to “register” on their site is completely unnecessary. Very few agents fall into this category, however. If you are one of the many agents who spends much time and money driving consumers to your site, capturing visitors’ contact information is incredibly important. Consumers who visit your site are actively looking at buying or selling a home and are likely to transact with someone; if you don’t at least ask for their contact information, you will greatly diminish your ability to get in touch with them, thus making it less likely they will transact with you!

Here are some important stats for you to consider:

- Market Leader generates hundreds of thousands of leads per month by using many online lead generation methods.
- We have pages specifically optimized to get conversions – i.e., capture leads’ contact information when they arrive on these landing pages.
- Our campaigns achieve around a 10 to 12 percent conversion rate, on average, for Internet search traffic by prompting visitors to register on the site by entering their contact information.

If your site has a contact form that is user initiated only (i.e., one that does not have an interruptive prompting to fill out the contact form), count on achieving conversion rates of 1 percent or less, depending on how the contact form is set up and where it is located on the page. The adage, “If you don’t ask, you won’t get” applies to lead generation. Asking your website’s visitors to register will get you 10 times more potential business than waiting for them to volunteer their contact information on their own volition.

If you still don’t think it is worthwhile to ask for your visitors’ contact information, consider this fact from a NAR study: 24 percent of new online home shoppers complete an action on a real estate site the same day they start researching and 78 percent visit multiple real estate sites.

The important conclusion you should come to from these statistics is if you don’t get contact information from first-time visitors and follow up with them immediately, some other agent will get the deal!

**Encourage Revisits**

Depending on their timelines, it can take anywhere between one month and two years before online searchers transact. A study by Hebert Research found that aspiring homebuyers can take two whole years to actually buy a home after they first consider doing so and, just as important, only spend a relatively small amount of time actively searching for homes.

How does this fact apply to your website’s structure? After you get contact information from home searchers, following up with them is a must. Encourage visitors to come back to your site with listing alerts that meet their home search criteria – since, as we discussed above, home buyers are most interested in seeing home listings. Following up with your leads and re-engaging them on your website will help ensure that you stay top of mind throughout the early stages of their home buying process.
What is IDX and How Can it Help Generate Leads?

If you have a website that displays listings, chances are you are using an IDX feed to get listings on your website. IDX stands for Internet Data Exchange (IDX) and is how the MLS shares listing data among its members. Since it is all about sharing listings, IDX is also sometimes known as “Broker Reciprocity.”

IDX enables all active listings in the MLS to be shared between MLS members and displayed on the websites of MLS participants (agents and brokers). IDX was created to make sure all MLS members have equal information to all MLS listings. Each MLS has policies in place for their IDX feed designed to make sure no one user has any unfair advantage and that all listings are available to the participants.

While the IDX feeds are designed to give all MLS members equal access to listings information, not all IDX websites are created equal. The website functionality of an IDX feed can make all the difference between having a website that generates business and one that doesn’t.

What is Your Site For?

The vast majority of agents say the main purpose of their website is generating leads. If this is your goal, effective lead generation campaigns rely on content that gives your target audience what they want. The purpose of a real estate agent’s website should be to appeal to potential homebuyers and sellers in order to generate leads.

So what are homebuyers and sellers
looking for online?

Homebuyers simply want to look at listings. Potential sellers also often want to look at listings to check out the competition for their home. And, since many sellers are buyers too, they may be looking for a new home to buy. That’s what an IDX feed on your website is for - to give these searchers what they are looking for: listings.

What do Effective IDX Websites Have?

An IDX website is a must for lead generation, but to get those leads you will need features that will make your IDX website into a business generator. Make sure your IDX website has:

- **Easy Navigation and Search** - Your website visitors should be able to easily find the listings they want. Your IDX website must have simple search filters to help users get to the listings that meet their criteria. If your site doesn’t make it easy for visitors to find what they want, they will leave and find the listings elsewhere.

- **Lead Capture** - The goal of the IDX website is generating leads, so you better make sure your IDX website has an optimized lead capture system. This is something Market Leader is an expert at. We constantly test and improve our lead capture system to get the most leads for our customers. Some best practices for lead capture that we have learned include:
  - **Prompt the visitor to register.** Don’t just wait for them to choose to register.
  - **Make the registration page as simple as possible.** The more information you ask for and the harder you make it for a visitor to fill out the form, the lower the conversion rate and fewer leads you have to work with.
  - **Use a two-step form.** If you want to ask for more information, request an email and name first and then add a second step to ask for further information.
Include a meaningful call to action. Don’t just tell them to give you their contact information; make sure they get something in return and communicate the advantages of registering on your site. These advantages can include complete access to listings, ability to save favorites, etc.

- **Automated listing alerts** - Sending automated listings alerts from your IDX website that are relevant to the listings visitors have been looking at is a great way to make sure they come back to your site, and helps to convert them from leads to clients.

- **An Integrated CRM** - Having an integrated CRM (Customer Relationship Management) allows you to keep track of what your leads are doing on your website as well as your communications with them. This will help you better prioritize your hottest leads and keep in contact with them when they are ready to transact.

An effective website is an important tool for you to get leads online - make sure your site is set up for success.
How to Keep Customers Engaged on Your Website

While a website must express a company’s brand, services and products (properties), it should also entertain the visitor up to a certain point. Boring, unprofessional and confusing websites make for bad store fronts for real estate businesses. It’s like walking into a store littered with products or lacking any employees. Generally, people will walk out of such a store and never return. Ineffective websites alienate customers, so it’s absolutely critical for real estate businesses to take an objective approach when designing or redesigning their website to enhance their customers’ experience.

Who is Your Audience?

You must figure out your target market or audience before you can create an engaging website. According to Christian K. Nordtomme, Creative Director at Next Page, “Real estate brokers and agents have two audiences: sellers, who need to be convinced that they’ll get the best price possible for their treasured home, and buyers, who need to know they’re getting a great deal. The website needs to hit home with both audiences.”

Not every design or layout works for every customer. Likewise, your website should appeal to your target market. For instance, those selling modern designed properties will have a greater chance of customer engagement by choosing a website design that incorporates a streamlined, contemporary
look. Create a website that mirrors your customer base or the types of properties that you sell.

**High Quality Photos**

Poor quality photos will not attract customers or keep them engaged. According to Justin Hughes, co-founder of Reality Mogul, “Quality photos will hook your visitors' interest much more effectively than low-resolution or otherwise poor-quality photography. They will be much more likely to dive into the text when it is accompanied by high-quality imagery, and let’s face it, real estate metrics can be very bland.” Using high quality photos in some cases is easier said than done. Investing in a digital camera or hiring a photographer to shoot a home can make all the difference in the world when designing a visually pleasing website.

**Reduce Friction**

Requiring visitors to take a number of steps while going through your website is a good way to get them to leave. Don’t require users to perform a bunch of actions in order to do the things they want. Each step or required action is a potential point where a user will drop off. If it is a pain to engage with your site, people will just move on because, at a certain point, it is no longer worth it to them. Allow them to do what they want with as little friction as possible and your engagement rates will soar.

You wouldn’t want to visit someone who had you perform chores for you, fill out paperwork or reveal their personal information. Don’t make your visitors work to get simple information on your site. Every major feature of your website should be a click away. Likewise, give people the ability to go back to the home page from every page. Visitors will not return if they get lost on your website.

**User Interface for Your Website**

A good user interface, or UI, allows customers to easily complete tasks like viewing listings, reading website content or contacting you. People have certain expectations about navigating on a website. Clearly designed categories and links allow the user to access information. Don’t try and reinvent the wheel with your UI. Unless you really nail it, you run the risk of breaking people’s expectations, and they will feel frustrated when trying to perform common actions in their usual way. Also, try not to overload visitors with choices. Keep things simple and make the most common actions obvious with higher-priority ordering in your UI.”
Design your website for the user and not for any aesthetic reasons. Navigate your own website from a user perspective to determine if any changes need to be made.

**Rewards**

Reward visitors for coming to your website. This doesn’t mean offering coupons or special offers. In fact, you can reward your customer with simply by providing engaging content, high-quality photos, and easy access to pertinent information and listings.

You can also increase visitor engagement by responding to comments or questions. As many real estate businesses find, customers feel engaged when the website has been tailored and thoughtfully created for them. While promoting your brand is essential, engaging your customer will establish a strong bond that can lead to a quality customer base.
Search Engine Optimization

Organic Traffic Isn’t Free: Beginner SEO Tips for Agents

Organic – it’s not just what’s for dinner. Like organic food, however, organic traffic to your website is obtained naturally – without paying for it or having it referred from a directory or another site.

In fact, organic traffic is sent to your site because the search engines “think” your site is interesting or relevant to the search terms. They like you – they really like you.

Since not every real estate agent can make it to the front page of Google, the question of the millennium is: “Why not?”

Why Doesn’t My Site Show Up in Google?

Google uses a long list of criteria – over 200 factors – to determine which pages rank for which search terms. The whole process is bundled in what is known as an algorithm, defined by Google as “… computer programs that look for clues to give you back exactly what you want.”

When a user enters a search term, the algorithm clicks and whirs and tries to guess what the user wants to see. It does this by considering terms on the site, how fresh the content is, what region the searcher is in, and “page rank.”

So, although just owning a website and publishing it to the Web doesn’t necessarily mean you’ll automatically rank, it is the first step.
Organic Traffic Isn’t “Free”

Earlier we defined organic traffic as being that which you don’t have to pay for. Although that makes it sound as if it’s free, don’t be fooled.

It takes time and effort to optimize your website for search engines – to have the content and links that Bing and Google find rank-worthy. Because your time is better spent drumming up clients, chasing after organic web traffic can actually be quite expensive.

Then, consider that there are no guarantees that all that work will pay off and put you above all the other agents in town when someone is searching for an agent.

Tips to Improve Your Ranking

Let’s take a look at some ways to nudge you ahead in Bing’s and Google’s rankings.

Compelling Content

Market Leader’s senior trainer, Shannon Shimabukuro, suggests beefing up your content. If you’re just starting a website, ensure that the content you use is “relevant, fresh and unique” so that it provides value for the user and positions you as the hyper-local expert.

Don’t just promote your latest listings, but tell readers what’s so great about living in your area. Let them know about interesting restaurants, the best dog parks in the area, where to get the best cup of coffee or hamburger. Sprinkle in advice on home buying and selling.

This isn’t a one-time task. Content has to remain fresh, which means you’ll need to spend time (or pay someone else) to make consistent updates to your content library.
Use Target-Audience Keywords

Think of keywords as a breadcrumb trail that will lead potential clients to your website. The keywords can be anything that your potential clients will enter into the search box when looking for an agent or a home. These keywords need to not only show up in your content, but in your page titles and images as well.

Shimabukuro cautions against “trying to rank for popular real estate search queries,” and recommends using hyper-local terms instead. For example, you’ll likely have more success using “condos in Hayes Valley” than you will for “San Francisco real estate.”

Finally, Shimabukuro cautions against the overuse of keywords; you don’t want to risk being considered a spammer by the search engines. She recommends using three to five phrases per page.

Links

The Miss Congenialities of Google have lots of links. Google’s algorithm takes a good look at the number and veracity of the sites that link to yours. Shimabukuro likens them to votes – the more links a site receive, the more popular it appears to Google and other search engines. Link to your site from your blog and your social networking pages, and be sure to use your targeted keywords when you create the links.

Nothing in Life or on the Internet is Guaranteed

The folks at Moz, one of the world’s foremost search engine optimization companies, claim that “Google changes its search algorithm around 500 to 600 times every year.” Not all of these changes have the impact of the “Panda” and “Penguin” updates, which cause the biggest changes for Google’s search engine algorithm, but even a relatively minor change can leave all your hard work in the dust.

Don’t put all your eggs in one basket with SEO, your efforts may or may not pay off with website traffic and leads. Make SEO one prong of a multipronged marketing strategy. While organic traffic is important, it’s is after all just one way of many to get visitors to your website.
Search Engine Optimization

How to Write Engaging Content for Search Engines

While most people understand that writing optimized content will raise their chances of ranking high on search engines, many people make the mistake of creating copy that is jam-packed with keywords or contains less-than-engaging material for their readers. According to Jill Whalen, CEO of High Rankings and co-founder of Search Engine Marketing New England, “Real estate agents should be writing for the searcher at the other end of Google. That person who has a problem or a question or some sort of need that brought them to the search engine in the first place. The idea isn’t to try to please the search engine with your content but to provide the searcher with the information that they seek.”

Writing engaging optimized content is not something that is intuitive or can started without any strategy. A clear marketing campaign is essential for both your short- and long-term SEO success.

Choosing Keywords

When keyword phrases are successfully used, they tell Google what the content or webpage is about so people can find that information. The term "keyword" is somewhat of a misnomer. People actually search for phrases rather than one word. For instance, searching for the word “home” would cause irrelevant websites to pop up. However, searching for the phrase “one-bedroom houses in Austin” will narrow down the list of websites. How does an agent choose keyword phrases? Here is Jill Whalen’s advice:
“You need to learn what it is that your target audience (presumably homebuyers) is looking for when they go to Google. There are, of course, obvious answers like ‘new homes in [city],' ‘[city] real estate,' etc., but all real estate sites are going to be targeting those keyword phrases. This makes for some pretty stiff competition. Not only are you competing with every other real estate agency in the area, you’re competing with the large all-encompassing real estate sites. Find some of the more obscure things that people want to know by checking out “question” sites such as Quora.com. A quick look at a real estate section reveals a whole slew of questions people have asked, such as, ‘Is buying a home still the best first investment?’ and ‘What are the best ways to increase the property value of your home?’ These questions become potential keyword phrases, or at least the ideas for new content on your real estate site that goes beyond the home listings themselves.”

Create a list of keyword phrases BEFORE writing content. Using the keywords on this list SHOULD NOT trump the quality of the content they are found in.

**Incorporating Keywords into Your Content**

Forget jam-packing your content with keywords. "Keyword stuffing" makes content sound unnatural and can get you penalized by a search engine such as Google. Penalization may result in your website getting removed from the search engine’s index of websites, effectively making it impossible for your site to be found on it.

How does one incorporate keywords into content?

“For long-tail keywords or longer multiple word keywords for, say, a blog that you’re writing in frequently, you don’t have to worry too much about incorporating specific keyword phrases. The words that you’re using naturally within the content make up an unlimited pool of long-tail keywords. While individually they will not bring a lot of traffic, once you have a lot of content on your site, you’ll start to see lots of search engine traffic for hundreds or even thousands of different keyword phrases. The idea is to continually put out great, unique information that your competitors aren't offering. You can of course take this one step further by adding keyword-rich title tags, headlines and subheadings to your already written article as long as they make sense to what the article is about,” says Jill Whalen.
• **Title tag** - The title tag shows up in three key places and is one of the most critical components of a well-optimized page. It appears at the top of its tab in web browsers, in search engine results pages and can automatically show up as link anchor text on external websites like social networks. The best practice is to make the title tag less than 70 characters; otherwise, Google won’t show it in its entirety.

• **Headlines** - Write a headline that describes the content. If you’ve written a blog about rehabbing a Victorian house, write a headline that includes words such as “renovation,” “Victorian,” “house” or “home” in the headline so people searching for those terms can find your blog post.

• **Subheadings** - Subheadings are placed throughout bodies of text to break them into thematically-linked sections. For example, a blog post on a Seattle real estate update might contain subheadings addressing home price improvements, inventory shortages, and the best neighborhoods for young families to live in to mark the beginnings of sections on those topics.

**What Makes Content Engaging?**

It’s easier to write boring content than it is to craft engaging material. Interesting, thoughtful information creates a connection with your target market. What else can engaging content do? “It appeals to the reader’s emotions. Content that addresses what real people with real problems need will be engaging to them. If the content is very much “we focused” (on the company itself) rather than “you focused” (on the reader) users won’t often go beyond the first paragraph. But if you can somehow make an emotional connection with that reader, they’ll stay engaged and want even more content from you. You’ve got to stress what’s in it for them at all times,” says Jill Whalen.

An easy way of figuring out if your content is engaging is to read it to someone else. Hearing the content read out loud and getting feedback will help you shape the information on your page so that it is engaging for the reader. Search engines will not tell you the exact algorithm that they use for ranking websites, but having engaging optimized content will always put you ahead of the game.
Why Your Web Domain is Important (and Why It’s not)

When it comes to generating website visitors and leads without placing paid search ads, your website address, or “domain,” is an essential part of your online success.

First, a quick definition of domain. We’re talking about what people type in to their browser to see your site, i.e., “JohnSmithRealtor.com” or “Reno-Sparks-Condos.com.”

Why Your Domain Is Important…

- **It’s your title.** People read a web domain like the title of a book, and they will judge it quickly. Your domain will drive more clicks if you are clear about what services and information you provide.

- **It’s your brand.** You’re probably putting your domain on all your print materials—which is a best practice. People will then need to type your domain into a browser, and that means your domain is part of your business’s identity, just like your logo. Pro tip: Short names are easiest to remember!

- **It’s part of your lead generation system.** If you’re looking to grow your business online, your website must be geared toward generating leads that you can convert into clients. Your domain helps bring people to your site, and then your site encourages and enables
them to provide you with their contact information. All the pieces must work together for you to close more homes and generate more business.

...And Why It’s Not Important...

Some people think you need to include keywords in your domain to make sure it appears high in Google, Yahoo, and Bing search engine results. While having a keyword-rich domain may have its merits in some circumstances, when it comes to ranking high in search engines, your website’s content matters much more than the domain name.

Nevertheless, it’s people—not search engines—who decide which link to click on. Make sure your domain is one that search engine users will feel comfortable clicking on.
Why Real Estate Pros Should Pay Attention to Website Analytics

As a real estate professional, the first contact you have with potential clients is often through your online presence and website. As you are implementing your marketing campaign to drive people to your website and generate new clients, you need to know if your website is working (converting visitors into leads and leads into clients) or making a good impression.

What are “Website analytics”?

It may sound like a term that only applies to “techies,” but it’s also important for any motivated real estate professional to know. Web analytics simply refers to data collected from your website that measures your traffic and helps you understand what visitors are doing when they get there. With a Web analytics tool, you’ll be able to eliminate the guesswork on what’s grabbing their attention—or making them leave your site.

Analytics software generates statistics about a website’s traffic, traffic sources, visitors’ navigation and conversion rates. This data helps answer certain questions:
• Where is your traffic coming from? Analytics lets you see what websites are sending visitors to yours. For instance, are your Craigslist posts getting you visitors or is Facebook?

• What is your bounce rate? The bounce rate indicates the percentage of visitors who visit a page on your website and leave before viewing other pages on the site. Your bounce rate can also tell you how well people are able to find information on your website. If your navigation tabs are confusing, people will quickly exit your website.

• How long are people staying on your site? Analytics provides you with data that reflects the length of time a visitor spends on each of your web pages in minutes and seconds. If a visitor spends 10 seconds on your real estate blog page, you know they aren’t actually reading any of your content. Unread real estate blogs indicate a problem with the content or with how people find information on your website. This data can help you figure out how to keep a visitor engaged.

• How do visitors navigate your website (visitor flow)? This data shows you what pages visitors come in on, how they navigate around your website and how they are getting to your conversion events. With this information, you can figure out which pages to change and where you should improve your website’s navigation so visitors can have a better experience.

By using this analytic data, you can make changes to your website that supports your overall marketing campaign. While it’s great to get a lot of website traffic, it doesn’t mean that the visitors are becoming leads. Analytics helps agents figure out what on their website is generating the most leads through conversion events.

Conversion Rates – Real Estate Lead Tracking

Visitors are great, but leads are better. Make sure your analytics allows you to track conversion events. A conversion event could be signing up for the newsletter, submitting personal information or requesting more information, subscribing to an RSS feed, using an “email this page to a friend” function or downloading a document. A visitor who completes a conversion event is potentially a valuable lead for your real estate business because they have shown interest in your services. You can then focus your efforts on turning that lead into a client.

Paying attention to your site’s analytics is one of the most important strategies in marketing and lead generation. Don’t fly blind without knowing what is happening on your website.
Keep Your Leads Coming Back to Your Website

Building a loyal customer base and keep them coming back to the store are common concerns among all business people. Considering how much more expensive and time-consuming it is to chase after new business, it is a valid fear.

Yet one of the most common mistakes business owners make, according to Entrepreneur’s Daniel Bortz, is focusing “so much time on attracting new customers that they skimp on the effort it takes to create loyal customers.”

While your leads aren’t yet customers, to retain them in any capacity requires offering them a reason to keep coming back to your website until you can convert them. Let’s take a look at some of the most effective ways of doing this.

The Right Tools

No matter what stage of the process buyers are in you can be certain that what they most want to see are listings.

- It may seem overly obvious, but the most important tool on your website is an IDX (Internet Data Exchange) system. Without this, leads will quickly move on to another site that offers the opportunity to search for listings.
- Your website should also remember who has registered so that when the lead returns to the site she isn’t treated as a new user. Having all of her interests conveniently saved gives her a reason to come back.
What if a user finds a couple of houses he’s interested in? Easy-to-use sharing capabilities, via email and social media, offer another convenience that creates loyalty.

Photos, and lots of them, are important to not only break up the monotony of text blocks, but to show as well as tell.

**Drive Them Back With Email**

One of the best ways of getting leads to pay another visit to your website is with fresh content that you’ve teased on social media and via email blasts. As long as the content is compelling and you promote it right, they’ll return to the site to check it out.

Neighborhood and market updates, fun news about the area, and even information about new listings, if packaged right, can pique a lead’s interest.

**Don’t Smother Your Leads**

While there isn’t a thing wrong with just reaching out to touch base and see how the search is going, having a valid reason for calling or emailing turns a cold call into a warm one. If you segment your leads according to where they stand in the buying process, driving them to relevant website content is a warm way of contacting them.

For instance, leads in the early stages need more step-by-step information than those closer to actually purchasing. Find experts who can help you provide quality content. For example, ask your favorite home inspector to write a blog post about the home inspection process, then make it known, via social media and email, that you have incredible information from the mind of an expert right there on your site.

**Considerations**

Although you want leads to return to your website, there is such a thing as going overboard in the enticement arena. Don’t push these people away by excessively contacting them. Reach out right after they sign up and then leave them in peace for a while – unless, of course, it’s a lead who wants to proceed right away. In that case, you have our permission to hound them to the ends of the earth!