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How real estate agents dominate with multichannel content marketing

Win listings and overwhelm competition by mastering the art of social media, direct mail and email

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Top real estate agents are wary of get-leads-quick schemes, and rightly so. Those looking for longer-term success have turned to a powerful marketing system, multichannel content marketing: marketing that educates and informs prospects across multiple, integrated channels.

To build a dominant real estate business in 2018, agents must create multidimensional marketing campaigns that mirror the decision-making journeys of their modern prospects.

Real estate's best and brightest use multichannel content marketing to tell their story. It's much more than casting a wide net; it involves strategically tying compatible marketing efforts into one system. At the base is quality, smart content designed to connect with buyers and sellers by considering all parts of their lives.

Many agents today know the importance of using social media and email at every phase of

their prospect's journey. They also understand the critical role of [newsletters or publications as the backbone of their farming strategy](#). But few take the time to produce meaningful content on these platforms and to engineer them into a single integrated marketing engine more powerful than the sum of its parts.

Content: the lifeblood of multichannel

Showing rather than telling fosters trust, a principle agents can use in their local content to demonstrate expertise.

Original content can also burnish agents' reputations. In fact, 82 percent of consumers report they feel more positive about a company after reading custom content, [according to marketing research firm Demand Metric](#).

A smart content play leads to real results. Website conversion rates — the percentage of website visitors who fill out a form requesting more information — is nearly six times higher for content marketers than those who simply advertise their services, according to marketing research firm Aberdeen Group.

Engaging, local content is the lifeblood of multichannel content marketing. Quality content must live at the core of each platform, not sales pitches. Below, we'll go through each channel and explain how to leverage each for premier results.

[For a list of ideal content topics and step-by-step multichannel content marketing instructions, click here.](#)

The “big 3” marketing pillars for real estate agents

Social media, email and direct mail are the top content marketing channels for real estate agents and the key elements of a smart, integrated content strategy. We expand on each

below.

Pillar 1: Social media

Seventy-eight percent of all U.S. adult internet users are on Facebook, and over half of all online adults use more than one of the five main social media platforms, according to a 2016 Pew Research Center study.

Real estate agents' social media presence includes everything from their Facebook business page to their Zillow profile. Great sites for publishing content include Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter (with YouTube as the prime site for video).

Agents can realize big results with their content marketing by using social media as one part of a larger, smart content strategy.

A smart social strategy, as with all content marketing, starts with good content. Agents should create and post articles and videos on subjects they know well. The best topics will both resonate with the local market and build their reputation as an expert.

Unfortunately, it's easy to post content without the branding necessary to effectively stand out, which means the agent doesn't benefit fully from the content.

Agents can ensure their content brings value to their brand and business by always posting it to their blog instead of sharing it directly on Facebook or Twitter in its original format.

Once you create a blog post, you can share a link to it on social media with an enticing comment. Agents can share these posts on multiple social media sites simultaneously, using tools such as Hootsuite or marketing automation platforms such as Act-On. These tools also make it easy to create and schedule a month's posts in one sitting.

In addition to local content, agents should use social channels to post listings, testimonials and updates. Interacting with people who like or comment on posts is also key for agents, as is responding quickly to messages they receive.

Pillar 2: Direct mail

Direct mail response rates outperform digital marketing by more than 700 percent, [according to Data and Marketing Association's 2017 Response Rate report](#). In fact, the overall response rate from physical mail jumped from 3.7 percent in 2015 to 5.3 percent in 2016, making last year direct mail's best-performing year since 2003.

In a world so wired, many of us suffer from technology fatigue. More and more consumers welcome the privacy and physical touch of print media. The success of today's direct mail for agents, however, depends to a large degree on the online experience prospects will have once

they take action from the mail. Direct mail cannot succeed as an isolated channel.

Successful direct mail marketing starts with a geographic farm and a commitment to consistently deliver content that interests readers. Direct mail doesn't work without those two key elements: quality content and consistent delivery. Each home in an agent's territory should receive repeated touches every month, year after year. Robust digital marketing should also accompany these physical campaigns.

Publications and newsletters are ideal direct mail tools for multichannel content marketing. These long-form mailers provide space for both quality local articles and branding.

Gary Keller, founder and leader of Keller Williams Realty, advises agents to mail publications on at least a quarterly basis. Discover's recent survey of its users backs up this advice: agents who consistently mail [custom publications](#) to farms of 3,000 or more homes report ROIs from 150 to 400 percent.



Additionally, postcards are a perfect vehicle to announce recently listed and sold homes, a list of neighborhood sales, or even fridge-worthy content such as recipes and event calendars.

With content-rich publications as the foundation of direct mail farming, postcards can play an important supporting role. Many agents find success by sending them between publications, ensuring their homes receive branded physical content each month.

Pillar 3: Email

Real estate agents can generate referrals from past clients by sending out highly personalized email campaigns at very low costs. Email is an extremely effective channel — in fact, it ranked as the leading digital channel for ROI in 2016, according DMA's 2017 report.

Agents can grow their lists using social media, blogging and direct mail. On social media and with direct mail, they can promote valuable resources that require prospects to enter an email address to access. "Subscribe" links below each post can pull in readers who may appreciate receiving similar content by email.

Given that it's such a powerful channel, email should be a staple of any smart content marketing strategy.

Content marketing emails are about demonstrating expertise and providing meaningful updates to prospects. This enhances an agent's reputation as an expert who really knows the

market.

Too many agents send full-length articles in their emails, and miss out on the SEO, branding and tracking a simple click-through link provides. Agents should host content on their blog and encourage email recipients to click over to it with an image and a few intriguing sentences.

Content marketing is about sending quality, engaging content, first and foremost. Promotional emails have a role, too, but they should be part of well-defined campaigns and action plans. Using automation software and nurturing leads first with content, then with promotional emails, can greatly improve conversion rates.

How multichannel content marketing boosts SEO

Distributing relevant articles and videos through email, direct mail, and social media will generate direct leads as well as boost SEO, which in turn generates even more leads.

In previous years, businesses could pump up their SEO with keyword and backlink schemes, but now search engines favor quality, popular content above all else. When agents regularly post original content on their blogs — and drive traffic to their posts with direct mail, social media and email — their websites will show up higher in search engine rankings.

The case for multichannel marketing

In taking a multichannel approach to the social media, email and direct mail methods outlined above, agents can deepen their personal brand recognition and not only reap the benefits of each channel, but enjoy the multiplied benefits that emerge with an integrated strategy.

While many agents and marketers readily acknowledge the importance and power of multichannel marketing, only a few take advantage of it. With so few businesses tapping into the potential of multichannel content marketing, agents who make the decision to implement it have a greater chance of breaking through the noise, engaging with consumers and winning more business.

Ultimately, multichannel content marketing is about showing customers you care, that you know your stuff and that you're available to help them. Through direct mail, email and social media, multichannel marketing sends a powerful message: "I'll meet you where you are, wherever you are."

Discover Publications' turnkey multichannel content marketing program turns successful agents into dominant forces. With [done-for-you social media, email and blogging, and territory-exclusive direct mail publications](#), agents can put a modern content marketing plan on complete autopilot. Discover Publications' agent clients report 150-400 percent ROI with consistent use.