

## Great Real Estate Marketing Plays from 2014

### Notes from the Field: Navigating Manhattan's Real Estate Market

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*Photo courtesy of Bloomberg Businessweek*

With New York ranked as the world's most coveted location for real estate investment, I have personally witnessed a seemingly historic influx of international buyers vying to get in on the city's frenzy of real estate activity. Considering the complexities and local nuances associated with buying in Manhattan, overseas buyers are sometimes caught off guard by the process of buying in the city. After several years of working in this market, there are five primary areas of consideration foreign buyers should take into account when looking to purchase a home or investment property:

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We've seen many top-notch real estate marketing tactics executed to perfection throughout 2014 — by everyone from beginner agents to seasoned vets and big-time brokerages.

Below are some of the most outstanding real estate marketers of the year who've mastered the art of blogging, website optimization, or other marketing activities. Take a peek at those who caught our eye this year and study what made their real estate marketing stand out. You'll find plenty of inspiration for your real estate marketing ideas.

(Note: This list certainly doesn't include every great blog, infographic, and other real estate marketing collateral published this year, so please share any marketing tactics you found inspirational, educational, and entertaining in the comments at the end of the article.)

### **Premier Local Real Estate Market Blogs**

Local search engine optimization (SEO) is the answer to the age-old question, “How do I attract buyers and sellers in my local market?” Optimize your site with long-tail keywords related to your area (e.g. “single-family detached homes for sale in [market name here]”) and you’ll generate qualified leads from search engines. The trick is you have to regularly produce keyword-rich, relevant content to attract those prospects. Learn how these agents use their real estate blogs to get buyers and sellers in their areas to flock to their sites.

### **Scottsdale Real Estate**

Some agents shudder at the thought of blogging because they think each post has to be lengthy to be effective. Wrong. Just look at Scottsdale Real Estate’s posts, which range from promotional (for its listings) to informative (to relay local events and home tips). What’s more, the firm is smart to own a niche with its real estate blog: It offers helpful tips for events, like Thanksgiving, for which it produced several educational posts to ensure its audience enjoys the holiday and avoids stresses. It may not all be real estate-related, but this content can still resonate with your leads.

### **Sam DeBord, Seattle Homes Group**

Another great real estate blogging tactic is providing the key local market information your audience needs to make informed decisions. “Should we move to this neighborhood or that one? What area of the city has the best schools? What about restaurants and retail?” Most home buyers want to know these things before narrowing down their search, and Seattle Realtor Sam DeBord clearly recognizes this. His blog is a must-read resource for Seattle-area buyers, and because of this, he establishes himself as a go-to real estate professional for the area.

### **Living Room Realty**

What better way to thank your clients for working with you than to showcase them on your real estate blog? That’s exactly what the Living Room Realty team out of Portland, Oregon, does. In fact, the firm goes the extra mile to paint a vivid portrait of their clients’ lives in their new homes. Showing you’re invested in the well-being of buyers and sellers is the perfect way to get your clients to spread the word about your business and give your real estate website visitors a glimpse of what it’s like to work with you.

### **Smith & Associates Real Estate**

Words aren’t always enough to explain things. Sometimes, images are needed to support your message, which is what Florida-based Smith & Associates does with its real estate blog (and to great effect). For instance, posts highlighting specific properties, neighborhoods, communities, cities, and amenities typically come with great imagery like maps of an area and photos in and around listings — anything to paint the picture of just what it’s like to live in the markets the firm serves.

### **A Couple of the Best Agency Blogs**

On the other side of the real estate blogging coin are agencies and brokerages who can dedicate major resources to developing outstanding content marketing. These companies capture their audience’s attention with an array of distinct post types.

### **Core NYC**

Humanizing yourself on your real estate website can do wonders for your brand. Just take a look at Core NYC's blog, which shows off everyone who works there — from the executives to the administrative staff. Showing off your agency's camaraderie and pride can go a long way in making your team relatable and, thus, more appealing to prospective clients. An overlooked factor in sellers' selection of agents is personality, so show yours off on your blog from time to time.

The firm also does a great job exhibiting the top neighborhoods, events, and amenities in its primary market (NYC, if you haven't guessed already), as evidenced by its video- and image-heavy posts showing what it's like to live in the Big Apple and how the real estate market there is shaping up.

### **The Agency**

Niche content creation is yet another real estate blogging strategy you can employ. Whether it's writing about a local community theater production, covering a city festival from the streets, or talking about your experience working in your real estate market, you've got no end to the types of content you can develop. The Agency does a splendid job at mixing up its posts. It has interviewed sommeliers, highlighted historical residences, and even listed the top farmers markets in its surrounding area — meaning its content appeals to a wide range of folks.

### **A Comprehensive (and Impressive) Blog Post Series**

If you really want to take your real estate blogging to another level without having to continually come up with new and interesting ideas, just go with one idea and break it down piece by piece. This tactic allows you to dive deep into one subject over time. Take a look at this prime example of a real estate agent who expertly educates her audience with in-depth content generated from a single concept: how to sell your home.

#### **“Steps to Selling Your Home” by Shay Hata**

Be useful to your audience: Chicago-based Realtor Shay Hata understands this, as she put together a lengthy (and informative) series of blog posts to guide her site visitors on what they need to know about selling a home. Offering guidance in this format can bring people back to your site on a regular basis ... as long as your information is useful and detailed.

### **Great Examples of Long-Form Content**

Playing the long game, so to speak, with your real estate content marketing has its benefits. Writing long-form content — think ebooks, reports, whitepapers, and guides — can establish you as an all-knowing, reliable resource for home buyers and sellers. All you need is patience and time dedicated to creating content over the course of weeks or months to develop informative long-form content your audience will love. Here are some of the top examples of longer real estate content from 2014.

#### **Washington Fine Properties**

The luxury housing market demands sophisticated marketing efforts. Washington Fine Properties ensures its real estate marketing is in full force thanks to a bevy of digital and print magazines detailing its properties, the local market, and luxury home stats and trends.

#### **Marques Strickland**

You don't need to be a big-time real estate firm to produce long-form content. For example, look at this ebook, titled "The 12 Month Plan to Buying Your First Home", from Connecticut-based Realtor Marques Strickland. Many home buyers need guidance through the buying process. Share-worthy guides like this — which covers buying tasks like securing a down payment and saving for closing costs — can keep home searchers coming back to your site to consume content consistently.

### **Intriguing and Attractive Infographics**

Blog posts, ebooks, reports, and other written content are great, but they are far from your only marketing options on your real estate website. More visual-based content, like infographics, offers not only a nice change of pace from written articles, but also a way to secure a loyal site following.

Different people prefer different types of content, so cover your bases and produce the occasional graphic that details local market stats, tips on buying or selling, mortgage information, or anything else you think would interest your leads.

Here's what three realty firms created this year that are perfect examples of what you can develop for your real estate content marketing.

#### **Jensen and Company Realtors**

While you can't go wrong telling home buyers what they should do during the buying search, it also doesn't hurt to share some don'ts about the process. Jensen and Company's infographic below details eight can't-do scenarios to help prevent prospective homeowners from wasting time or money.

#### **Select Group Real Estate**

Compiling industry statistics is a popular concept for many real estate infographics, and Select Group fashioned an eye-pleasing and educational graphic here that shows the importance of hiring an agent: a little something for the FSBO crowd who may not be convinced they need a professional to help them offload their properties.

#### **Shorewest Realtors**

A visual representation showing the step-by-step process homebuyers will go through during their search for residences gives them an easy way to understand everything involved. Shorewest Realtors did a phenomenal job of making an attractive, explanatory infographic buyers can comprehend (and a little self-promotion here and there is fine, too).

#### **Unit Realty Group**

Infographics don't always need flashy graphics. Simply including pertinent info in a clear and easy-to-follow manner can do the trick, as it did in this graphic from Boston-based Unit Realty Group.

### **Video Marketing Done the Right Way**

Another growing and effective form of visual real estate marketing is video: ones showing listings, happy clients, agents talking about local market conditions, or giving a tour of their neighborhood. All of these offer the perfect showcase material for your real estate website. If you need some examples of agents and

firms doing video marketing right (and that includes hiring the right help), take a look below to see what some of the top real estate pros shot in 2014.

### **The Boutique Real Estate Group**

Going above and beyond to showcase one property in a two-minute, Hollywood-esque short film may not be in everyone's budget, but since California-based Boutique Real Estate Group has the wherewithal to create stunning videos, it's decided to take advantage of the medium. If there's one firm you can (and should) learn about video marketing from, it's Boutique Real Estate Group.

### **Sotheby's International Realty**

Consistency is a major factor that helps agents and firms build audiences online — and this includes consistency with video publication. Sotheby's uploads multiple listing videos and other recordings to its YouTube channel weekly, meaning its audience will find something new on the channel with every visit.

### **Nest Realty**

Providing a mix of video types also helps bolster your real estate video marketing, as evidenced by Nest Realty's YouTube channel, which features testimonials from clients, interviews with local market entrepreneurs, listing tours, and much more.

If you're looking for more inspiration for your real estate video marketing, check out this Academy post featuring eight of the top listing videos from 2014.

### **Website Social Proof Implemented to Perfection**

Developing content for your real estate website doesn't simply mean writing blog posts, in-depth reports, and landing page copy. It also means allowing your client base to do the talking for you. Reviews and testimonials should exist across your site to act as social proof: promotional content that shows you're a great real estate agent who has a history of delighted clients with lots of nice things to say about you. These agents use social proof to show they're the ones to hire in their respective real estate markets.

### **Brendon DeSimone**

Getting featured in national publications is no small thing. Brendon DeSimone is clearly proud (as he should be) of being mentioned by and contributing thoughts to news outlets nationwide, and shows off these news hits front and center on his real estate website. On top of that, he also makes sure visitors get a glimpse of his other accomplishments and accolades, like his book on real estate.

### **Danielle Lazier**

Testimonials featuring flattering client commentary, awards won in the real estate industry, links to relevant sites featuring background information and career history: All of these are displayed on Danielle Lazier's homepage — one every agent should consider emulating with their own real estate website.

### **Agents with Expert SlideShare Presentations**

Your real estate website needs content to thrive, but there are other sites where it's optimal to publish content, too — for instance, SlideShare. The presentation platform hosts reports, ebooks, infographics,

and slideshows from just about every industry. Real estate agents all over use the service to share their creative works and spread awareness of their companies. See how this firm used SlideShare in 2014 to enhance its real estate marketing efforts.

### **Paris911 RE/MAX of Valencia**

As we've mentioned on the Academy before, inbound marketing is the "long game," meaning you plant seeds online and, over time, your brand will sprout and appear atop search engine results pages (SERPs). Create lots of engaging content, like Paris911 does on SlideShare, and you'll get many clicks. This firm is constantly churning out great SlideShare after great SlideShare. Here's one the agency created regarding home loan errors to avoid:

### **Two of the Top Industry Podcasts and Webinars**

Podcasts and webinars have taken off in recent years, including among the real estate community. Many agents host weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly webinars with their real estate leads to inform them on market trends and teach them the ins and outs of buying and selling, while others conduct webinars to answer their audience's questions and educate them on niche topics, like securing a mortgage. Below are some of the top real estate webinars and podcasts of 2014 that can inspire your own.

### **Kelly Mitchell, Agent Caffeine**

Aside from running her own brokerage in Hawaii, Kelly Mitchell also runs the popular Agent Caffeine podcast, which serves as a soundboard for real estate industry commentary and provides invaluable advice to fellow agents and brokers everywhere. Common topics covered include how to modernize your business and the keys to developing solid real estate marketing strategies. Though the podcast isn't consumer-facing, it positions Mitchell as a go-to resource for other real estate professionals and helps her grow her network.

### **Pat Hiban, Hiban Digital**

Author, entrepreneur, and top-selling real estate agent are just a few ways to describe Pat Hiban, who runs his own podcast series that features major players in the real estate industry and provides insight to fellow pros. Hiban produced dozens of podcasts during 2014, many of which feature top-performing industry members. Agents who want to glean real estate and wealth-building tips and tricks from an experienced and successful industry vet would be wise to tune in to Hiban's informative podcasts.

### **Captivating Real Estate Email Marketing Campaigns**

Finally, we come to email marketing for real estate. Sending newsletters, digests, and other email messaging to your audience can pay huge dividends. Take these agents' email campaigns, for example. They have a knack for creating effective email strategies to get leads coming back to their real estate websites and social media accounts to learn more — meaning they're nurturing them through the sales funnel. Check out some examples of their email marketing below to see how to truly engage leads.

### **Marguerite Giguere**

When you brand yourself as "The Skydiving Agent," it's likely you're someone who takes chances — and that includes with real estate marketing. Such is the case with Tacoma, Washington-based Realtor

Marguerite Giguere, whose email campaigns are lively and full of her outgoing personality (as shown by the Photoshopped pic of her and her gingerbread friend). The seasonal digest email below is the perfect example of what makes her email marketing so appealing.

### **Melissa Zavala**

Big, bold images with short, to-the-point blog post descriptions: That's the perfect recipe for a digest email, and broker Melissa Zavala executes it to perfection with her real estate email marketing. Of course, it helps to have a real estate website as comprehensive as hers is, but promoting it in this fashion surely helps improve many site metrics.