

# 21 WAYS TO GROW YOUR NETWORK



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# 21 WAYS

## TO GROW YOUR NETWORK

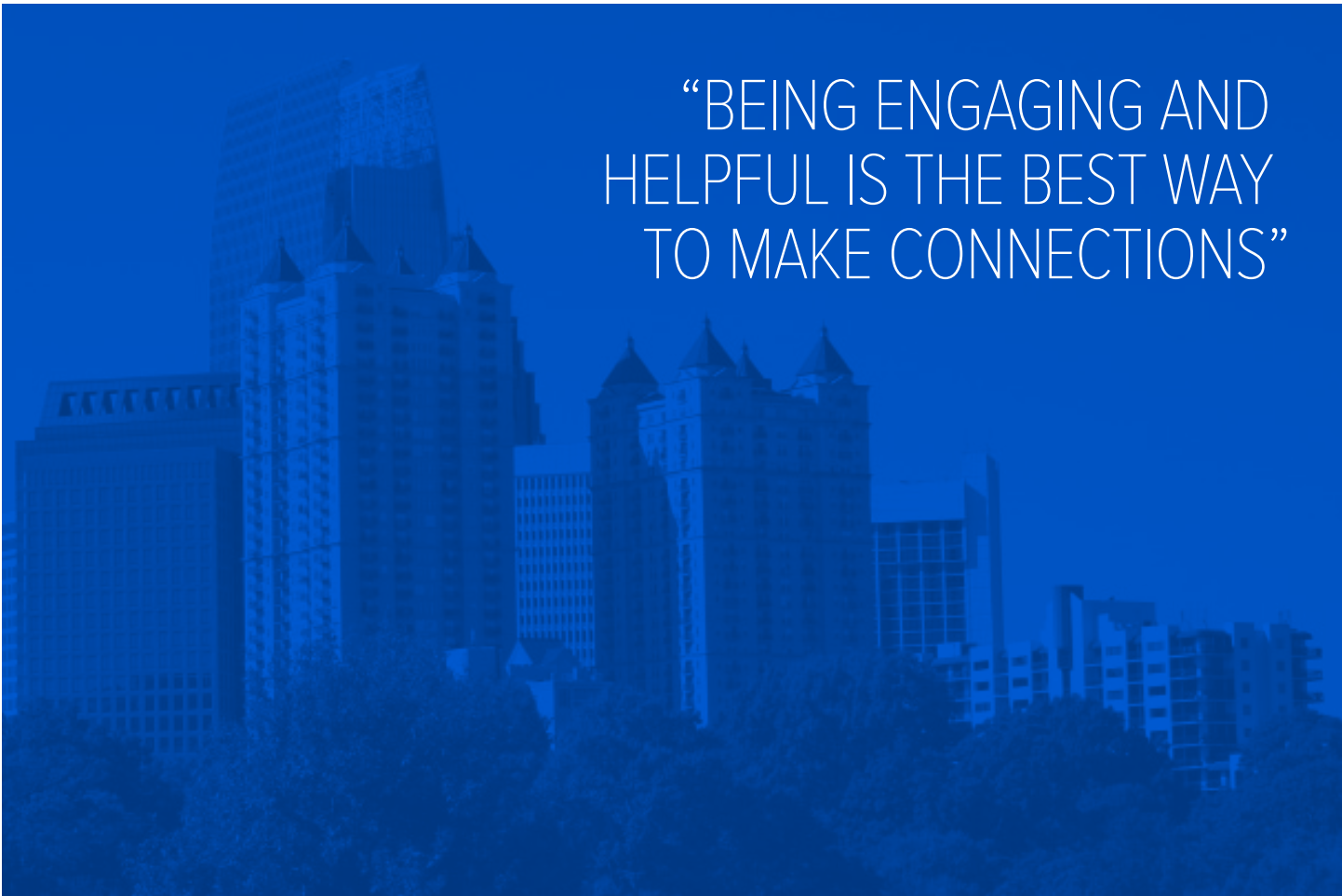
One of the first things you'll learn when starting out in the real estate industry is that your network is your lifeline. Without them, you won't be around very long. If you're reading this and thinking, "My network? I've got my friends, my family, my neighbor Marsha, my dog's groomer... um..." well then, we've got some work to do. Even if you can rattle off your 200 closest acquaintances, it never hurts to grow your network even further. Here are 21 creative ways to expand your reach.



# CONNECT

## WITH YOUR COMMUNITY ON FACEBOOK

An easy way to grow your network on Facebook is to expand your reach past people who are immediately looking to buy or sell a home, and instead make your Page a hub for local community news and events. Try sharing a weekly post on “Places you need to be this week” where you can engage with local businesses and share events. This will broaden your target audience, and help grow your following. Remember, social media is a two way street! Not only should you be posting information about local events, but you should also be engaging with other local businesses by liking, commenting, and sharing their posts. The biggest mistake a social media newbie can make is treating their social channels like a microphone instead of a network.

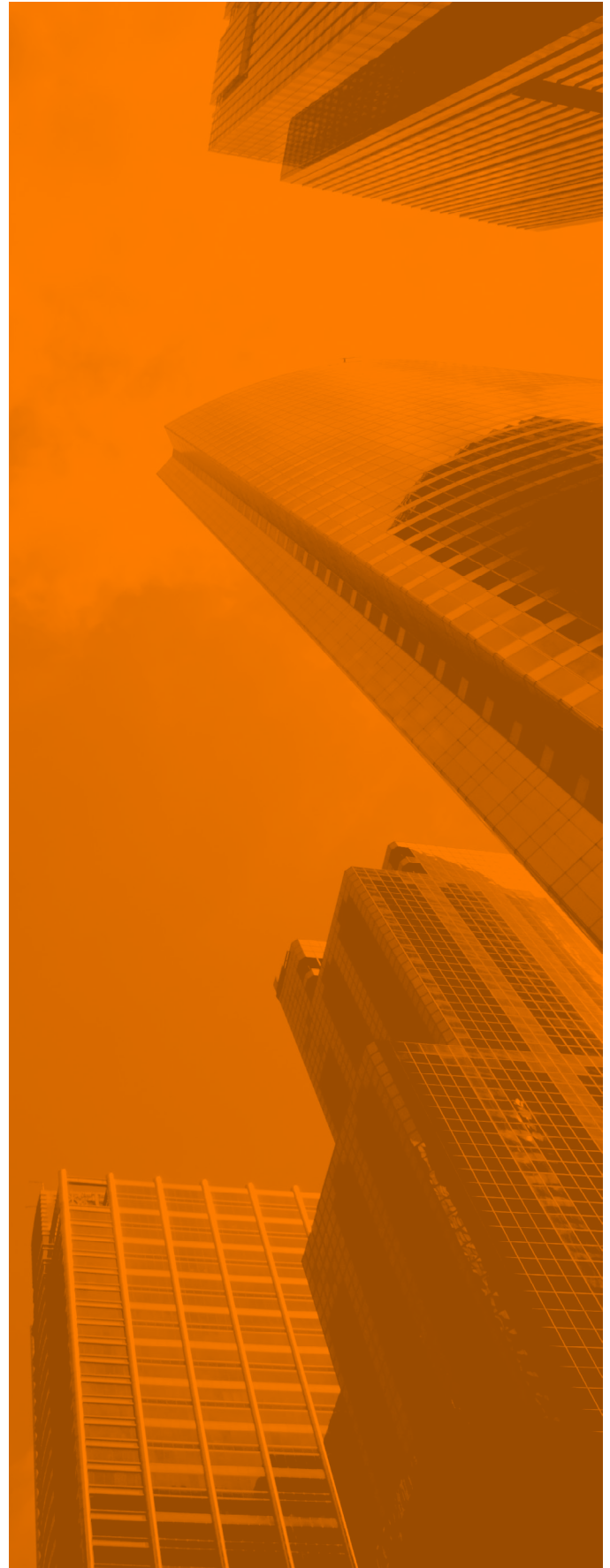


“BEING ENGAGING AND  
HELPFUL IS THE BEST WAY  
TO MAKE CONNECTIONS”

# JOIN

## SOME GROUPS

Facebook groups can be an incredible way to get advice from your peers or make connections with people in your community. For starters, try joining some local groups, such as a local professionals or a real estate investing group. When you join, write a post introducing yourself, explaining what you do, and what you're looking forward to getting out of the group. Then, join some national real estate groups. **Here are 5 of our favorites.** Introduce yourself here as well, and don't hesitate to chime in if you see a question you have an answer for. Being engaging and helpful is the best way to make connections.



# FIND OTHERS

## LIKE YOU THROUGH MEETUP

Are you passionate about a hobby? Whether it's running, rowing, or red wine drinking, you can probably find a group of local people who share your passion on **MeetUp**. This site allows any member to schedule public meetings, whether they're at a park, restaurant, bar, or any other place. You can join meet ups around your area or create new ones if you can't find what you're looking for. People love to work with others that share their interests, so growing your network with others that share your hobbies and passions can be invaluable.

When you attend a meet up, don't go with sales in mind. If it comes up, feel free to hand over a business card, but you shouldn't be cornering people to discuss real estate. Remember, we're looking to grow a network to increase business over the long term, so don't scare people away!

“PEOPLE LOVE TO WORK WITH OTHERS THAT SHARE THEIR INTERESTS”



# TUNE IN ON TWITTER

Twitter’s search function is a powerful and underused feature of the social network. Not only can you search for people and local businesses, but you can also search for users that are moving to your area. Try searching “Moving to *Your City*” or “Buying a house in *Your City*” in the search bar at the top of your Twitter timeline. You’ll likely come across a handful of people Tweeting about moving to your market. If they’ve Tweeted about it in the last week or so, follow them and Tweet a quick message to them about how great the area is, and share a link to a blog post or article about the city. Hopefully, they’ll engage with you and give you a follow back. When they get serious about moving and buying a home, you’ll be top of mind. New to Twitter? Here are **5 quick tips** to get you started.



“YOU’LL LIKELY COME  
ACROSS A HANDFUL OF  
PEOPLE TWEETING ABOUT  
MOVING TO YOUR MARKET”



# PICK A CAUSE

## AND GET INVOLVED

People like working with real people, not just “effective negotiators” and “local experts.” Get involved in a local cause and put a human touch on your “About me” page while also making connections in your local community. Love animals, children, or the arts, but not sure how to get involved? Try searching your area and interests on [Volunteer Match](#) where you can find organizations that need your help.

If your brokerage doesn’t have an organized community event, try starting one! The biggest example of this is Keller-Williams’ Red Day, but even a company of 5 can make an impact. Getting together and championing a worthy cause can help improve your whole community while giving your business a boost.

“YOU’LL BE  
IMPROVING YOUR  
WHOLE COMMUNITY  
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YOUR NETWORK”

# INTERVIEW: PAUL WILSON



## **What effect has The Wolfson Children’s Challenge had on your local community?**

The Wolfson Children’s Challenge is a community event to Celebrate our Children’s Hospital as well as a day for parents and the children to take their minds off of the battles that they may currently facing or have faced. We have raised over 2 million dollars for the hospital and have purchased state of the art medical equipment. You can find out more about the challenge [here](#).

## **How has your involvement with this project affected your real estate business?**

My real estate business has been affected in a very positive light. When I go on a listing appointment and the seller is aware of my commitment to the community and my achievements outside of real estate, they have an instant trust in me. It is much easier to secure listings and also I usually do not have to negotiate my commission. It really separates me from my competition. I can honestly say that my business is continuously growing.

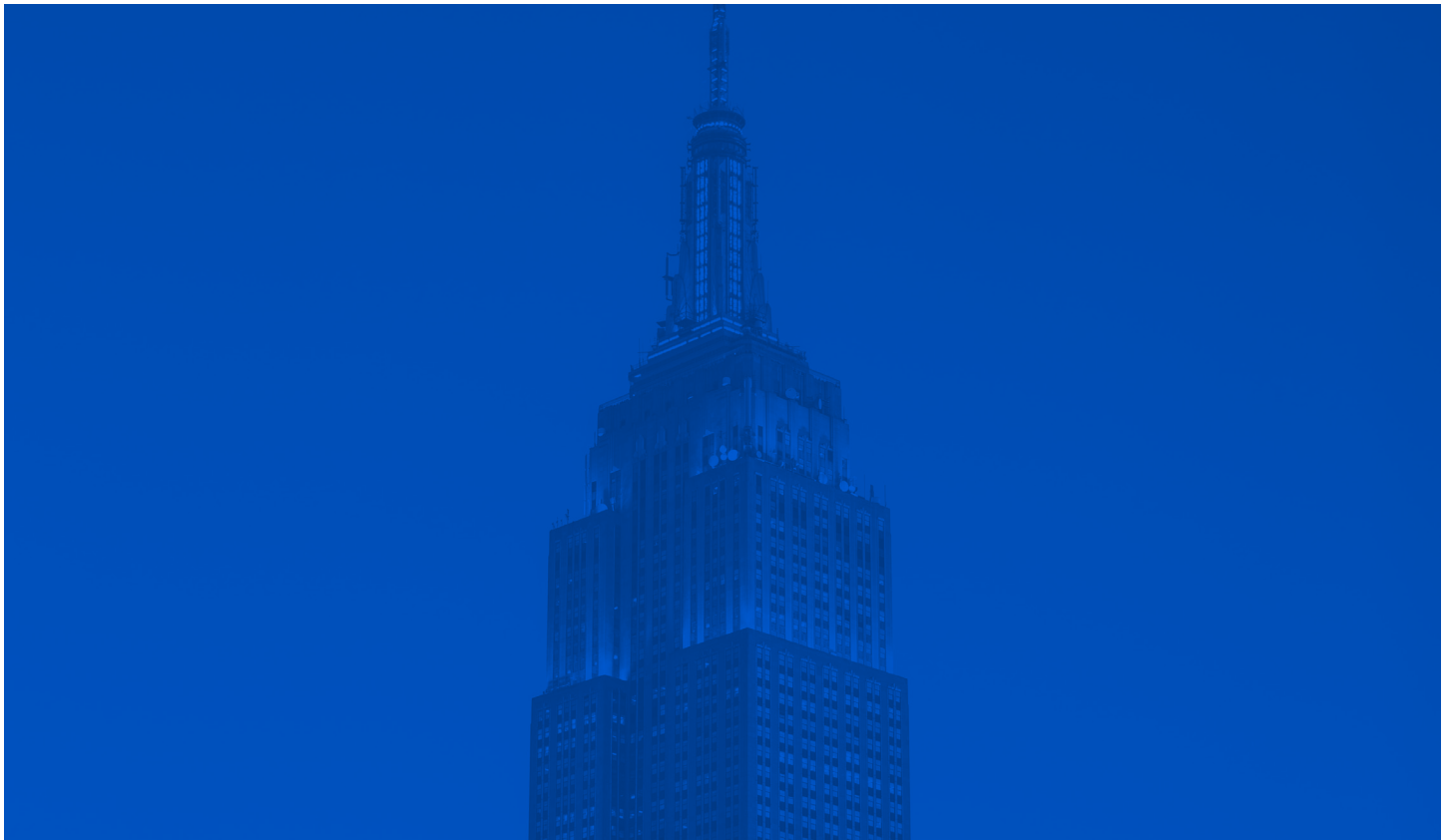
## **What would you tell an agent who doesn’t think community involvement is important?**

I would tell an agent that there has to be something tugging at their heart. Whether it’s helping the homeless, animals, children or the elderly. Act on it and see what happens. You will see very quickly how important you are to your community and the impact you have on it. By making our community better, more growth in the community will happen. You will see the real estate market affected in a much more positive way as well.

## **What advice would you give to a new real estate agent?**

I would strongly suggest that a new real estate agent get plugged into their community. As I mentioned in the last question, do something that is meaningful and purposeful to you. You will not only make a positive impact in your community, but will get noticed and your business will flourish.





# BEC@ME A PINTEREST MAVEN

Pinterest has grown from a hub for cheesy butter biscuit recipes to a bona fide player in the social media marketing game. Different types of consumers utilize different social networks, and Pinterest's demographics are slightly different than Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn. Pinterest is a predominantly female user group, and is more popular in suburban and rural areas. The decision makers in your target audience might not be on Twitter or Instagram, they could be on Pinterest. This is why it's important to be present here as well as other social networks. Pinterest has some great tools, such as a [Chrome extension](#), and a [connection with Buffer](#) that can make it quick and easy to keep your profile updated.



# COLLECT

## CONTACT INFO WITH CONTENT

Someone isn't likely to fill out a lead capture form on a real estate agent's website until they're seriously considering buying or selling a home in the near future. However, there's a lot more people in your target market who would subscribe to a weekly blog post about a community they're interested in, or download an eBook that gives them valuable advice about saving up for a down payment. This exchange of information is what makes inbound marketing so effective. You're able to provide a consumer with real value, instead of just expecting them to fill out a pop-up lead capture form.



# MAKE

## BLOGGING A HABIT

There's nothing more intimidating than a blank page. If you want to start creating content that will improve your search rankings and website traffic, you better get used to facing that blank page more than once a month. Some of the most successful real estate blogs turn out content at least once a week, some as often as one post a day!



### **How has consistent blogging impacted your real estate business?**

Much of my new business comes from blogging. I have a fairly large readership and some of those people contact me when they need a real estate agent, or they give my name to others who are looking for an agent. I also attract referrals from agents who see my blog and who have clients who are moving to or from my area. Last year I got a wonderful referral from Texas.

### **How do you find time to write every day?**

I don't find the time to write every day, but I publish everyday. I write when it's convenient for me. Sunday afternoons are about my favorite time to write. I have a plan and generally write about 3 posts at a time and schedule them. I keep a running list in Evernote of ideas and things I want to write about or photograph. I rarely run out of ideas because real estate is pretty much my life. It is common for agents to start a blog and write when they have time. That's the wrong approach. My blog is as much a part of my job as showing houses or going on listing appointments. I make the time and schedule it, or it would never happen. I can not think of anything in business or in life that is successful if we leave it until the end of the day only after all of our other work is done, yet that is a common approach to blogging.

### **What would you tell someone who doesn't think blogging is effective in real estate?**

I would tell them that for most people it isn't effective because they don't stick with it. It isn't quick instant leads. There is no formula for guaranteed success and most agents don't have a clue as to how to write on a blog with out saying making it all about them. Blogging is more like farming. It is about connecting with people over and over again until they recognize your name. The content does stay out there working for me 24 hours a day year after year. I like that there's very little competition in blogging. This morning I was looking at my competition. He had 500 visits to his site in April and I had over 20,000. I am working with two clients who visited my blog in April and contacted me.

# BECOME

## A YOUTUBE GURU


Video can be a valuable addition to any real estate marketing strategy. Not only is YouTube the 2nd biggest search engine in the world, it's the perfect outlet for demonstrating your knowledge and personality to potential clients.

Scared to be on camera? The only way to get over your fear is to try it. Pick a topic your target market is interested in learning about, set up your camera in a well lit area, and start talking. When you're done, upload it to YouTube. The more you practice, the less you'll stumble, and the more engaging your videos will become.

# WORK

## ON YOUR LONG-DISTANCE REFERRAL BUSINESS

Building a referral network outside of your immediate area can help generate leads from buyers moving to your area. The quickest ways to make connections in other cities is through networking groups on Facebook and LinkedIn, and real estate forums like ActiveRain. Ask and answer questions on these networks, and you can connect with other professionals across the country. A little patience and you can forge these friendships into an effective long distance referral network!



“BUILDING A REFERRAL NETWORK CAN HELP GENERATE LEADS FROM BUYERS MOVING TO YOUR AREA”

# BOOST

## YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE WITH GOOGLE+

Google+ is the social network with the biggest possibility to impact your search rankings, yet it's still widely underused by real estate professionals. Here are some tips for getting traction on Google+.

- **Post directly to your page:** While it's okay to link off to your website and blog from your Google+ page, it's also helpful to post content directly on your profile. This content will be quickly indexed by Google, giving you a better shot at ranking highly in search engine results.
- **Drive traffic to your page:** Since content on Google+ is so beneficial, try to direct potential clients to your page whenever possible. Include links to your profile on your website and blog, and link to posts from your Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest pages.
- **Connect with others:** If someone is logged into their Google account when searching, posts by their connections will show up higher in search results. The more people you're connected to on Google+, the more people will be seeing your content.

# INTERVIEW: BILL GASSETT



## How has using Google+ impacted your real estate business?

Google+ has had one of the greatest impacts on my business for a few reasons. I have made some really exceptional connections which has allowed me to expand my reach on all of my social media channels as well as creating some substantial interest in my real estate blog. One of the biggest mistakes I see Realtors making on social media is forgetting the word “social”. You will not get very far by just blasting out stuff in social channels and not doing anything else. The relationships I have formed on Google+ have provided traction for my blog I otherwise never would have received. By forming these relationships I regularly see my content get linked to from other sites which strengthens my site’s SEO. My shares on other social sites such as Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn have also grown due to these Google+ bonds that have been formed.

## How do you find time to write every day?

One of the best things I did on Google+ was create my own **real estate community** the day that communities were introduced by Google Plus. This allowed me to create even more relationships with a different set of folks further expanding my reach. There are not many people in the real estate industry who don’t know who I am.

## What would you tell someone who doesn’t think social media is effective in real estate?

I would tell them they’re crazy! I will preface that however by saying that like anything else social media is an investment in time. You can’t expect to do anything well unless you put in the time. Some agents are great at post card mailings, others are great at going after FSBO’s or expired’s as a means of getting business. The common denominator however is having a game plan in place and working it. Most Realtors will quit before they ever invest enough time to be successful. The perfect example is the agent who does a few mailings and doesn’t get any calls. What do they do? If you guessed stop doing mailings, you would be right. The problem with that is it takes lots of mailings before you see a return on investment. The average person needs to see your name and branding multiple times. The same can be said about social media. You can’t be on social media sites every so often and expect this will be a productive means of getting business.

# LEVERAGE LINKEDIN PUBLISHING

LinkedIn recently rolled-out a long form publishing feature that's available on any profile. Think of it as a mini blog with posts that appear on your LinkedIn profile for connections and others to see.

- **Keep it short:** Articles with 400-600 words get the most shares. Focus in on one specific topic that you know well, and write a short post about it. It's better to keep your articles to the point.
- **Write to your audience:** Who are you writing for? That depends on your professionals goals at the moment. Are you seeking to find professional connections for referrals and business growth, professionals in related fields for guest blogging opportunities, or locals in your area that are potential leads? Pick an audience that you would like to reach on LinkedIn, and focus on creating frequent content pieces for them.



# GET FACE TIME WITH INFLUENCERS AT CONFERENCES

There's no denying that the price of conferences can be steep. Real estate shows and conventions can cost hundreds of dollars for a few day event. However, the connections you make at these conferences can be invaluable. It's not the information that's presented at conferences that's the most valuable, it's the face to face networking opportunities with major players in the industry.



# GET INVOLVED

## ON INSTAGRAM

Instagram is one of the easiest social networks to grow your following on, because it's so easy to browse and see new people through their hashtags and discover features. Instagram is all about images, which means your posting strategy should be a little different than other social networks. You'll want to focus on the most visual aspects of your job — houses, neighborhood and city scenes, and the people you work with, like clients and other agents in your office. Before you post, browse for some relevant hashtags, such as your city name or neighborhood tags.



# ATTEND LOCAL EVENTS, AND DOCUMENT THEM



Not only does attending local events get you out into the community and help you make connections, it also gives you great content to share on your blog and social media channels. If there's a parade, concert, or festival that happens every year in your area, go to it, and take lots of pictures! Annual or monthly events can be popular search terms, and if there's not a ton of online information about the event, you'll have a better chance of ranking highly. Here are some tips to get the most social traction from your local posts:

- **Use hashtags:** Events, neighborhoods, restaurants... you name it, it probably has a hashtag. If you're attending a concert or food festival, do a quick social media search to see if there's a hashtag you can use on your Twitter and Instagram posts. This will increase the likelihood of someone outside of your following will see your post and engage.
- **Check in:** Instagram has a powerful location tagging feature that allows you to "check in" to a place or event. When you share an image or post, add the location. This will allow others attending the event or browsing pictures of that tag to see your post, even if they don't follow you.
- **Tag others:** The more people that are tagged in your social posts, the more likely it is to be seen and shared. Tag anyone at the event with you, and you can also search and see if the event has a Twitter or Instagram handle, and tag them too.



# JOIN A LOCAL BOARD OR COMMITTEE

Joining a local Chamber of Commerce, Lion's Club, Rotary International, Junior League, or community board will help you connect with influencers in your area. If you're new to an area or haven't connected with other business owners and professionals, these groups are an awesome way to get involved. They also work to improve their community, so you'll be pitching in for a greater cause as well as making connections.

# ANSWER

## THE PHONE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE

Talking to a real voice creates a connection better than any online message. Seems obvious, right? Unfortunately, not every agent is easy to get a hold of. In fact, lack of communication has been the #1 complaint against real estate professionals for several years running. Once you get processes and plans in place to grow your network and generate leads, you have to be prepared to keep in contact with them to keep them interested long term.

# WRITE

## FOR A LOCAL PUBLICATION

Many local papers, magazines, and news websites have a real estate section, and they may be looking for contributors. Even if your local publication doesn't have a real estate section, they might be open to adding a column — especially if they can do it for free. Get in touch with an editor and pitch your idea for a contribution, such as a monthly local market report, schedule of upcoming local events, or a real estate advice column.

Play to your strengths. If you don't know anything about creating housing report charts, don't offer to make them! A publication will want high-quality content, so choose a topic you're comfortable writing about. Getting published will not only give your personal brand a boost, it will help you become a stronger and more consistent writer.





# BUILD

## YOUR BRAND WITH A UNIQUE WEBSITE

If you're handing out business cards directing potential leads to find you online, you need to have something engaging and stunning to send them to. Here are the must-have features of any real estate website:

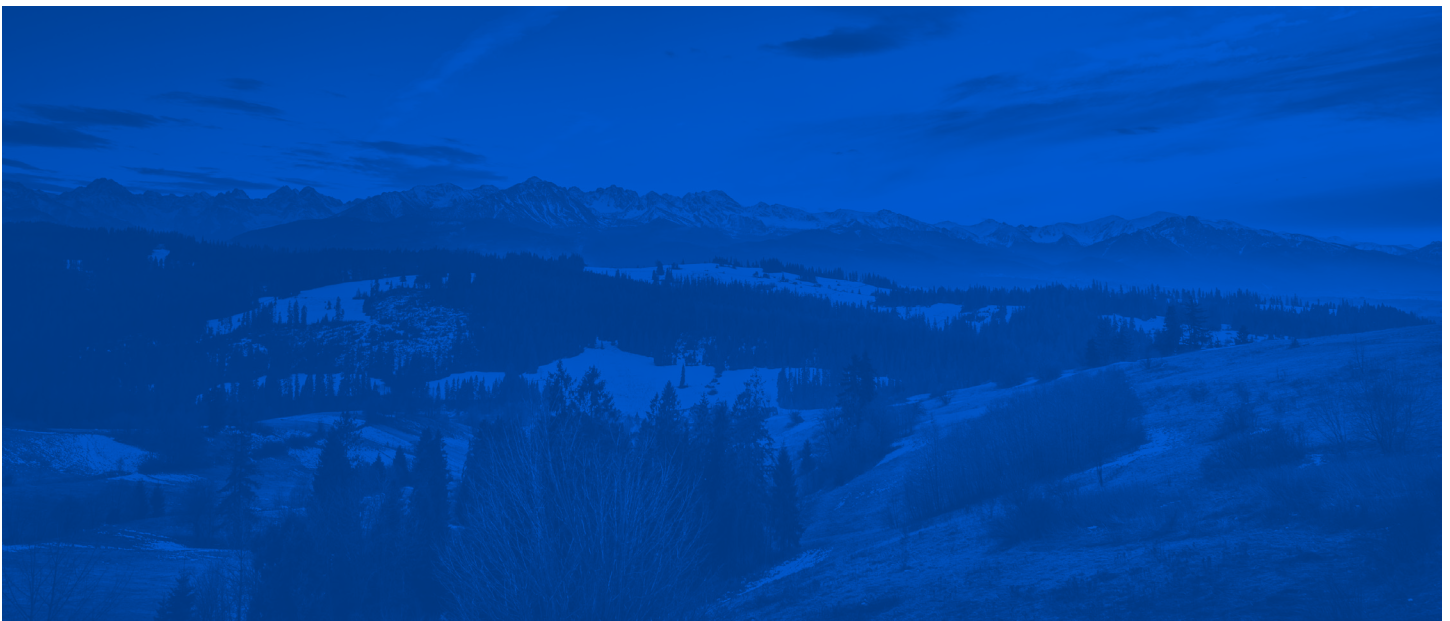
- **A mobile-friendly layout:** More than half of all Internet traffic now comes from mobile devices, so it's important to have a responsive website that looks great on any device.
- **Landing pages:** Even the most stunning website won't collect leads without any landing pages. Be sure to include a few simple landing pages and lead capture forms that you can direct your site visitors to.
- **Keyword friendly content:** Pick your target audience, then build content pages and blog posts around information they value. This will help you increase your traffic and climb search engine rankings organically.

Want to know more features every real estate website should have? Check out [this eBook](#).

# JOIN A PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING GROUP

When you think of networking events, you might picture bad speed dating — asking a quick “What do you do?” while trying to get your business card in as many hands as possible. But many networking events are way more engaging than that. Many groups rent out event spaces with food, drinks, and activities that give people the opportunity to have real, meaningful conversations with other professionals. Here are some tips to rock any networking event:

- **You’re more than a job title:** When someone asks what you do, give them your specific niche and specialty instead of just saying “I’m a real estate agent.” This will make you more memorable, while also starting a conversation.
- **Don’t be afraid to meet anyone:** There’s one thing to keep in mind when you start a conversation with a big shot at a networking event — they’re a real person too. The most well known people in the room are likely used to getting pitched all the time, so if you can craft a real conversation with them instead, you’ll form a real connection.
- **Be engaged:** Nothing makes a worse impression than being the person constantly scanning the room, looking for the next person to talk to. When you engage with someone, make eye contact, nod, keep your body angled toward them, and most importantly — listen.



# KEEP

## IN TOUCH WITH EVERY CONTACT, EVERY TIME

Even if you're the greatest at attending parties and collecting business cards, your business won't see any long-term growth if you aren't making an effort to keep in touch with your new connections. Here are some things every agent needs to stay on top of their connections and leads:

- **Business card scanner app:** Import contacts straight into your phone using an app like **Evernote** or **CamCard** for easy access.
- **E-mail marketing system:** Once you've captured someone's contact information, you have to find a way to keep them engaged with you. Manual e-mails will take over your life if you let them, so invest in a drip e-mail system to help you out.
- **CRM:** All of the leads in the world won't make you money if you can't keep track of them. Look for a CRM or lead management system that allows you to track your contacts, from new business cards to hot leads.



**ATTRACT**  
HIGHLY QUALIFIED LEADS.

**NURTURE**  
YOUR PROSPECTS.

**CLOSE**  
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