

## Marketing Your Website

Many loan officers and real estate agents want websites. But most misunderstand how to capitalize on the technological investment. A website will not bring you business merely by having one. Like any other tool you have, (i.e. a nice office, seminars, a fancy brochure, etc.), if no one knows about it, it does you absolutely no good.

There are two good reasons to have a website:

**To better serve your existing customers.** Applying online is a huge and important reason to have a site. Calculators, mortgage terms, listings, and faq's are all value-added services that will enhance your current relationship with your existing customers.

**To generate new customers.** You can find new clients via web marketing, but it may not be as easy as you think.

No matter why you are webbing it, you have to get the customers to your site to benefit. Here are some things you probably already do to make certain your current customers know about and use your site:

1. **Print it everywhere!** Your website should be in every ad, on your business cards, stationery, envelopes, flyers, all your promotional materials, and in your signature of every single email you send out (personal and business).
2. **Say it everywhere.** All your phone messages should direct people to your website. Every time you take an application, let people know about it. When you introduce yourself, mention it... TWICE!
3. **Give customers a reason to keep visiting.** Make something worth coming back for on your site.
  - Publish your favorite recipes page (and you could include your customers' favorites too – imagine how many times they may pass along *that* link to their friends!).
  - Every single week you give a great web-tip. Publish it on your webpage, making sure you have permission for any information you use and give credit at the bottom of the page – just "Information courtesy of ..." should do.
  - List testimonials, then email the families to let them know they are published on your page.
  - Make a "customers' kids page" with published pictures of children's artwork (your clients' children of course).
  - Have a contest! Play a "Where's Waldo" game – hide an obscure object somewhere in your site, and have a contest for people to find it. The winners could be eligible for a chance to win a shopping spree, or perhaps they all receive coupons for a McDonald's fry and a free inspection.

To generate new customers, you'll have to learn to market ON the web. Not as easy, and not as valuable, but it can be done. Here are some tips:

1. **Stay local.** Obviously, the web is world-wide. But when's the last time you gained a client in China? Don't waste your efforts reaching wide. Narrow your target market and try and keep your online marketing targeted to your city.
2. **Submit to search engines.** This is for the real techies among you. It's time consuming, but you may have some success listing in search engines for real estate or mortgages in Denver, or Dallas, or Los Angeles, etc.
3. **Become an online expert.** This may involve giving some time away. This article you are reading is free, and makes no money directly. But what writing articles, an ezine, or holding chats does is establishes you as an expert. It will add perceived value for your current clients and may win you some internet clients as well.



4. **Don't waste your money.** Banner ads, etc. just won't give you the effectiveness you need in a local market. Most internet marketing is free, just time and knowledge intensive. Even if you plan to hire help eventually, it will pay to learn how to do what they will be doing. You can learn the ins and outs of web marketing and be much better equipped to direct your marketing campaign.

Websites are here to stay, but we need to become savvy at marketing them to make them truly pay off.

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