



## Create a Personal Marketing Plan

Now that you've embarked on your new real estate career, one of the most important things to do is to let people know about it. Personal marketing is the process of getting your name "out there," so that people think of you when they need to buy or sell a home.

For more on creating a plan, see our [tool kit on personal marketing](#).

How do you do that? The first step is to develop a Personal Marketing Plan, a written document that describes your business goals and how you plan to achieve them. The plan should include:

- **Objectives and goals.** Clearly state what you want to accomplish for yourself in your new career, whether it be letting all of your family and friends know that you're in real estate, attaining 10 listings in your first year, or achieving name recognition in 50 percent of your target market area. Be sure to quantify your goals so you can then measure your accomplishments.
- **Audience.** Who is your target market? Is it everyone within a particular geographic area? Is it certain type of homes or a particular group of like-minded people? You shouldn't try to be all things to all people. It's a good idea to select one or two groups to target with your marketing efforts.
- **Differentiation.** What makes you unique? Setting yourself apart from other salespeople is essential in a crowded marketplace. Decide how you'll approach real estate sales to set yourself apart from others in your market. Also determine whom you will appeal to, and tailor your message to this audience. [Selecting a niche](#) within your market that works for you is an important part of your future success in real estate.
- **Media.** Determine which media—print advertising, brochures, Web site, in-person marketing, community involvement—you'll use to get the word out about your services. Focus on two or three media initially to control marketing costs and determine effectiveness.
- **Action plan and schedule.** Establish a detailed to-do list to execute your marketing plan. You need to be consistent in your marketing and stick to a marketing approach for at least six months. Repetition is the key to having prospects remember you. [Read through our sample action plan for a salesperson with limited marketing funds](#).
- **Budget.** Once you have a marketing plan, establish a budget. It may be tough to think about spending money when you may not have made much, or any, money in real estate yet. But most veteran practitioners agree that setting a marketing budget from the beginning of your career to promote yourself and your services is essential to achieving success in real estate. (Check out our entry on [developing](#)

- [marketing skills](#), for a list of the marketing materials—business cards, brochures, and so on—you'll need).
- o Determine how much you need to spend to acquire the basic marketing materials by getting estimates from vendors. To get started, you can spend a small amount to have your business cards and personal brochures made now and then allocate, say, 10 percent of your commission in the first few years to develop other marketing materials.
  - **Once you have a marketing plan and budget in place, be sure to re-evaluate it each year.** It's important to determine if you've met your goals for the year, and if you haven't, decide what you need to do differently the following year to accomplish your goals. You also should increase your goals or set new priorities each year to ensure that you continue to grow your success.

## 8-Step Personal Marketing Plan

A polished, thorough **personal marketing plan** will keep you motivated and help you reach your real estate sales goals. This essential document should include a detailed budget, your target audience, marketing and advertising plans, and other activities that will help you rise above the competition.

Sound overwhelming? It's not. Just follow this 8-step plan and you'll be on your way to success.

**TIP:** Determine your market share by dividing the number of sales you made by the total number of annual sales in your target market. The result is your percentage share of the market.

### 1. Define Your Objectives and Goals.

First develop a big-picture vision for your business — become the top producer in your area, retire in 10 years, dominate a certain niche of buyers and sellers. Then quantify that vision with measurable goals. Measurable goals might include:

- Obtaining 50 listings in the next year.
- Achieving a 60 percent name recognition in your target market area.
- Receiving referrals from 75 percent of your past customers or sphere of influence.
- Securing a 20 percent share of the market in your target area.

### 2. Target a Specific Audience.

Select one or two groups to target with your marketing efforts. Be sure that your defined audiences are large enough to generate the number of sales and listings you want. Analyze the characteristics of your best prospects. Characteristics might be:

**TIP:** According to "Monday Marketing Tips" by Pili Meyer, it may be useful to consider creating multiple Web sites for specific audiences. Each Web site should resonate with the group targeted. For example, create a first-time buyer page with different information and a different look than a Web page designed for retirees.

- Income brackets
- Age groups
- Geographic areas
- Ethnic or cultural groups
- Levels of education or certain professions
- Lifestyles, such as golfers buying second homes

Market conditions also play a role in the your marketing plan. A strong seller's market may require a plan that focuses on why a real estate professional is needed in the transaction. A weak economy might suggest highlighting your ability to help with financing as part of your marketing approach.

### **3. Differentiation.**

**TIP:** To focus your thoughts, write down what makes you different in 15 words or less. Then read your ideas aloud several times and edit accordingly.

What makes you unique? Setting yourself apart from other salespeople is essential in a crowded marketplace. Remember, customers chose products and services based on the benefits they deliver. Consider your own strengths and weakness, and focus on the qualities and skills that make you special to potential customers. Express your message in language that your target audience uses. For example, don't use current slang to sound cool when your audience is 40-something move-up buyers. Possible points of differentiation are:

- Education — law degree, CPA, etc. (Benefit: Knowledge of legal and financial issues can make the transaction process easier.)
- Residency in the neighborhood you represent (Benefit: Knowledge of available services, activities, and interests of perspective neighbors.)
- A leadership role in a community or professional group (Benefit: First access to new ideas in the industry and sources of solutions to problems via networking.)
- A natural affinity for a certain group — seniors, for example (Benefit: A special understanding of the needs and desires of that group.)

### **4. Refine Your Message.**

**TIP:** Match your media choices to your target market. Your media choices should reflect the interests, habits, and needs of your prospects.

Select a message and sales approach that will grab the attention of the people you want to target. The message should highlight what makes you different from your competitors and have an emotional appeal to your target market. An emotional appeal speaks to what people want — security, a sense of family, financial security — and focuses on their needs and desires. You will probably think of many things you'd like to communicate, but try to focus on two or three key elements that are important to your niche. Too much information can be overwhelming.

## **5. Determine the Best Media.**

**TIP:** "Social media is the new networking. It's a virtual way to get to know your 'neighbors' so that they might feel comfortable working with you." —*Pili Meyer, Monday Marketing Tips*

Select two or three media to convey your message and allow for cross marketing among several different sources. Media choices include print advertising, online advertising, billboards, bus benches, in-person marketing, and more. Also be sure to have a strong and active presence across several social media sites. Social media can be used to interact with potential clients, share interesting news and meaningful information, and keep up to date on the happenings in your area, suggests personal marketing specialist Pili Meyer. Wherever you choose to focus your attention — Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram or Foursquare — monitor and update your page regularly to maintain and heighten that level of communication. For consistency, designate one day of the week to provide followers with specific information, e.g. Market-update Mondays. This builds familiarity with the kind of content you provide as well as a reason for buyers and sellers to check in with your accounts. Particularly for those with a younger client base, Meyer suggests posting regular video updates to YouTube or similar video sharing sites. These videos should be treated as informal "chats" about topics of interest in your market. There are several [tools](#) available to consolidate multiple social media accounts and monitor existing ones.

## **6. Create Your Action Plan and a Schedule.**

**TIP:** Don't change your marketing message because you're bored; you have heard it many more times than the average prospect. Repetition is what builds recognition.

An action plan is a to-do list for a set period that lists every activity you need to do to market yourself and your services. Consistency is a key component to successful marketing. Advertising experts say that people must hear a message 11 times before they remember it. Make a commitment to use one marketing approach for at least six months, and budget accordingly.

## **7. Prepare a Detailed Budget.**

**TIP:** The cost per item of printing 2,000 brochures at one time is less than the cost of printing two groups of 1,000 brochures each. Take advantage of these marginal savings if you can. But be sure you have a specific use in mind for the extra 1,000 brochures, or you are just wasting your money.

The most challenging aspect of creating a personal marketing budget is estimating costs. Rather than guessing, call your suppliers and service providers, tell them you're preparing a budget, and ask them to provide estimates of the price you can expect to pay for each item. Ask your suppliers about quantity discounts and other ways to cut costs. The total cost for your personal marketing effort will depend on the size of your target market and the media you choose.

## **8. Measure your results.**

Are you achieving the goals you set forth in your plan? You'll never know if you don't measure. Always ask callers where they heard about you, and keep track of their responses. Use small letter codes in direct mail to identify each piece for easier tracking. Analyze the results of your measurement and use your conclusions to update, revise, and improve your personal marketing campaign. Don't continue to spend money on something that isn't working.

**TIP:** The surest way to build a war chest for personal marketing is to set aside a certain percentage of your income on a regular basis. Michigan real estate broker Ralph Roberts recommends reserving 10 percent of every commission check for personal promotion. If your income is already in six-figure territory, you might be able to shave off a few points.

As you measure results, keep track of your costs. One way to do this is by calculating the cost per contact. If you mailed out 500 brochures at a cost of \$2,500 and received 10 inquiry calls, your cost per contact is \$250.

Set up a separate savings account for marketing funds so you won't be tempted to dip into them for other expenses. Typically, you should allocate 10 percent of the funds for personal marketing, 30 percent to reach new prospects that fit your customer profile, and 60 percent for repeat business, according to marketing guru Jay Conrad Levinson, coauthor (with Seth Godin) of *The Guerrilla Marketing Handbook*.

## Own Your Niche

Make a name for yourself by carving a real estate specialty that combines your interests with local market opportunities.

July 2009 | By [Matt Baron](#)

When Gary Gestson started in the real estate business seven years ago, he marketed himself to the masses. He made cold calls, reached out to his sphere of influence, and focused on becoming the go-to guy for real estate in his neighborhood.

The problem? "There were thousands of real estate agents in my area who were doing the same thing," says Gestson, a salesperson with Long & Foster Real Estate Inc. in Gaithersburg, Md. And although he was making a decent living, he wasn't having very much fun. "Selling houses that all look alike quickly became boring to me," he says.

About six months into his career, he jumped at the chance to work with a buyer who wanted something different—a historic home. The search process was far more time-consuming than usual, he says. "We looked at every home from Brunswick to Baltimore" before the buyer decided on a 1930s cottage in Gaithersburg's Old Towne neighborhood. But he didn't mind. "It was during that time that I fell in love with historic homes," says Gestson, who spent more than 20 years as an art dealer before getting his real estate license. "Every home I looked at was like a new adventure."

Four years later, after creating the Historic Home Team and launching a niche Web site ([www.historichometeam.com](http://www.historichometeam.com)), Gestson was the top producer at his office. And while other practitioners in his market have struggled with a housing slowdown the last couple of years, he's had a steady stream of business. In fact, 2009 is on track to be a banner year, he says. "Having a niche allows me to focus my marketing efforts," he says. "I don't have to reach out as much as I did before. People find me."

Another perk of being a specialist: His clients tend to associate with other historic-home enthusiasts. "If I've got one satisfied customer, I've got 10 referrals waiting," Gestson

says. "My clients are very qualified and they're buying something for the long term. They want to work with someone with specialized knowledge."

Research shows that Gestson is right. A 2008 survey of buyers and sellers by the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® reveals that 80 percent of buyers would prefer to work with a real estate practitioner who's focused on a particular type of property. While specialization has always been important, industry leaders say it has taken on an even greater importance in recent years—and not just because of the challenging economy.

"If you look at society today, it's all about specialization," says REALTOR.com President Errol Samuelson, who led a session on Web marketing at the 2009 REALTORS® Midyear Legislative Meetings in Washington, D.C. "Consumers are trained to look for personalized experiences. It's why there are 500 cable TV channels instead of everyone tuning into the same network news broadcast every night."

Yet the real estate industry doesn't seem to have embraced specialization as fully as other sectors, Samuelson says. REALTOR.com's marketing research team recently surveyed a wide swath of real estate practitioners' Web sites and found that only about 11 percent indicated a specialty of any kind. Although the survey wasn't scientific, the results suggest there are opportunities for you to stake your claim to a real estate niche that fits your interests and market dynamics.

### **On the Hunt for a Specialty**

Ready to find your profitable niche? One way to start is by looking inward, identifying your special skills, knowledge, and passions. Gestson realized he had a zeal for historic homes and was able to parlay skills from his days selling antique works of art to help sellers market their one-of-a-kind properties.

Likewise, Ginny Mees of Keller Williams Realty in Danville, Calif., found that her experiences buying and selling homes as a single mom made her well suited to help other independent women. "You end up gravitating toward what you love to do," says Mees, who organizes real estate workshops on issues such as whether to keep a home after divorcing. She recently launched an online network for women at [www.womenhomeowners.com](http://www.womenhomeowners.com). The site provides a range of free resources for women and allows users to search by ZIP code for experts in homeownership issues. Mees hopes that other practitioners around the country will join the network for a fee to connect with women buyers and sellers in their area. "There's no better way to differentiate yourself," she says. Mees notes that her meetings and Web site are open to everyone, not just single women.

As helpful as it is to have a personal connection to your niche, Mees says your decision can't be purely sentimental. You have to have the market data to support your business focus. Mees, for example, cites NAR's *2008 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers*, which

shows that single women comprise 20 percent of buyers, up from 14 percent in 1995. She investigated the numbers after noticing that more and more of her clients were single women. "I didn't find my niche. My niche found me," she laughs.

Sam Miller, CRS®, GRI, of RE/MAX Stars Realty in Mount Vernon, Ohio, took an even more methodical approach to choosing a specialty. In 2001, after 15 years in the real estate business, Miller felt that his success had leveled off. He had set a goal for his seven-person team to average a sale for every day of the year, but no matter what they did, they couldn't surpass 260 property sales a year. After evaluating growth potential within a 20-minute drive of his office, he identified a 2,400-home lake resort community, Apple Valley, and decided to center his business on that area.

He built an intricate database of people who owned homes or vacant lots there and then categorized properties by waterfront, lake view, and golf course. He launched a postcard campaign that gave home owners an *Apple Valley State of the Market Report*, he advertised in the community's monthly newspaper, and he snapped up a memorable URL, [www.applevalleyohio.com](http://www.applevalleyohio.com). The year after developing his niche, his team's sales total climbed to 322. The next year, it surpassed his sale-a-day goal, with 380 transactions.

Miller hasn't been immune to the market slowdown—sales volume dropped in 2007 and fell even more in 2008—but he feels it would have been much worse if not for his specialty. "If I hadn't developed this niche, during the slowdown I would have had to let people go," he says. "Now that the market is turning around, I'm not spending my time and energy training new people. I'm out listing and selling homes."

### **Being Nimble Pays**

For all the real estate practitioners and sales coaches who insist that having a well-defined niche is the best path to success, there are some who argue against it, saying it's better to be well-versed in a number of areas so that you can quickly adjust to market changes. Some practitioners go so far as to maintain multiple Web sites and blogs, each geared to its own niche. And others prefer to have no specialty at all.

"My niche is constantly changing, which I guess makes me a generalist," says Emily Sachs Wong, perennially one of the top salespeople at Koenig & Strey GMAC Real Estate in Chicago. "When I sell a \$500,000 condo, I get a bunch of referrals for that type of property. When I sell a \$2 million house, I seem to have a lot of \$2 million buyers."

In Miami Beach, Fla., Mark Zilbert also rolls with market changes. The owner of Zilbert Realty Group says he favors a "niche lite" approach, switching gears often to fulfill the hottest pockets of buyer and seller demand. "If you had talked to me two years ago, I would have said my main niche is high-end waterfront real estate," he says. Now, a



significant share of his business comes from short sales. "I'm always planning six months ahead for what I think is next."

Whether you choose to specialize or you prefer a more flexible approach like the one Zilbert takes, you must possess a love for your work. That, more than anything, is what shines through to buyers and sellers. "Do what you enjoy doing; otherwise it's not worth doing at all," Gestson says.

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## 5 Ways to Find Your Niche

**Analyze local demographics.** Probe U.S. Census data to spot demographic trends—a surge of baby boomers in your area, for example—and pay special attention to underserved groups, says Josh Gonzalez, director of Realty Executives International's Latin Division, which helps provide trustworthy service to Latinos. "The largest portion of Hispanics are of Mexican descent, but it's not a homogenous group." But be careful, says Gonzalez, when working with large demographic groups that you don't alienate any one subgroup.

**Pinpoint your passion.** What do you know and love? For Cookie Boyd, ABR®, e-PRO, it's golf. The former golf pro is now a salesperson with John R. Wood, REALTORS®, in Naples, Fla., where he specializes in finding buyers homes on golf courses that match their skill level. The idea stemmed from a conversation he overheard in the clubhouse; a man with meager golfing ability was complaining that the course near his home was too difficult. "Do you want to live on a golf course where you're always frustrated?" says Boyd, who observes clients playing golf before showing them homes. "If you hate the golf course, you're a prisoner."

**Zero in on a defined geographic area.** In a large city, such as New York, you can take that to an extreme. Real estate broker David Michonski, CIPS, of Coldwell Banker Hunt Kennedy in Manhattan, has salespeople who are the expert on a particular condo building—"knowing every seller in that building, knowing the color of the dog's eyes, knowing the children's names," he says. "Every seller wants to know one thing: 'What have you ever sold that's like my property?'"

**Look right in front of you.** Art Reed, CRS®, SRES, broker-associate at Huff Realty in Florence, Ky., suggests reviewing clientele from the past few years to identify emerging patterns. "A few years ago I was more of a generalist," Reed says. "Then I saw that I was working with more seniors." Melanie McLane tells a similar story. In the 1990s, she realized many of her very first clients from the 1970s had become seniors. "I had this 'duh' moment," says McLane, ABR®, CRS®, a real estate trainer, broker, and appraiser based in Jersey Shore, Pa. "Because I had kept in touch with them, there was my market."

**Tap your existing networks.** Look at the organizations you belong to in a new way. Heavily involved in the parent-teacher association? "You can endear yourself to parents, other PTA members, and staff," says Julie Escobar, director of corporate marketing for ProspectsPlus!, a Bradenton, Fla., real estate training company. "One school might have 2,000 kids in it—you can really take that a long way."

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### **Become the Expert: Tips for Success**

**Get the credentials.** Designations and certifications give you specialized knowledge and boost your credibility. Just be sure that when marketing yourself, you explain what those little letters after your name really mean. Also, if you have past experience or non-real estate training that puts you in tune with your clients' needs, don't be shy about telling people. For example, a buyer of a waterfront property might appreciate that you're a former sailing instructor.

**Understand the lifestyle.** Delivering excellent service requires that you understand your customers' attitudes, tastes, and motivations, says Laurie Moore-Moore, founder of The Institute for Luxury Home Marketing in Dallas. Buyers and sellers in the luxury market often include business owners and executives who are used to seeing the numbers to back up their purchasing decisions. "They expect you to know the numbers cold," she says. "If you can demonstrate that you do, it's amazing how quickly you can build your business in the luxury segment."

**Share their enthusiasm.** Specialize in environmentally friendly homes? Use recycled paper for your print marketing materials and write on your blog about green housing trends. Marketing to cycling enthusiasts? Participate in a race. You can also attend conferences and community gatherings related to your niche, suggests Gary Gestson of Long & Foster Real Estate Inc. in Gaithersburg, Md. "If you want to sell historic homes and find historic buyers, you have to hang out where they do."

**Become an online resource.** Successful niche marketers say the Internet is one of their best tools for reaching out to customers. Buy a memorable Web site address that speaks to your niche, and use your site to provide a range of information that would be useful for your buyers and sellers. Specialize in urban condos? Perhaps you can provide links to local public transportation schedules and information on walkable communities. Start a blog to share news and insights that your customers will value.

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### **The Fair Housing Conundrum**

If you're creating a niche marketing plan around a specific buyer or seller demographic, be careful not to run afoul of the law.

The Fair Housing Act says it's illegal to advertise or make any statement that indicates a limitation or preference based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap. That means you can't focus your business plan or advertising tactics only on Hispanics or Arab Americans and exclude African Americans, Asians, or Caucasians, for example. Likewise, you can't market your services only in Christian-oriented publications, even if you'd prefer to target only those who want a Christian salesperson.

"The best rule we give is this: Describe your skills and the property, not the people that you want to live there or the people that live there now," says Nancy Haynes, executive director of the Fair Housing Center of Western Michigan.

Indeed, there's nothing wrong with marketing yourself as having certain language skills—so long as you pitch your services to the population at large, not just to those ethnic groups who speak that language. Then prospects can decide to choose you because you share a similar background—but you're not choosing them based on some similarity they have with you.

There are other strategies you legally can use under the Fair Housing Act. First, you're usually on safe ground if you focus on a property-related niche instead of a client-related one. Some examples: fixer-uppers, condominiums, resort housing, foreclosures, eco-friendly homes, golf course communities, and historic properties.

Second, you can focus on specific needs that aren't covered by fair housing, such as relocation, an interest in living near a particular hobby or sports offering, and the level of understanding about the buying and selling process (just be sure you don't make assumptions about the likelihood of any group being first-timers).

It's possible to follow the advice of the marketing gurus and target a niche without violating the Fair Housing Act. But be inclusive in your marketing, allowing prospective clients to choose whether they want you to represent them. For more information, visit [REALTOR.org/fairhousing](http://REALTOR.org/fairhousing) or [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov).

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## **Designate Yourself a Specialist**

The NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® and its affiliates offer more than 20 designations and certifications for specialties ranging from second-home sales to working with seniors. Here's a sampling:

**ABR®** Accredited Buyer Representative <http://rebac.net>

**ALC** Accredited Land Consultant [www.rliland.com](http://www.rliland.com)

**At Home With Diversity** [REALTOR.org/diversity](http://REALTOR.org/diversity)  
**CCIM** Certified Commercial Investment Member [www.ccim.com](http://www.ccim.com)  
**CIPS** Certified International Property Specialist [REALTOR.org/international](http://REALTOR.org/international)  
**CPM®** Certified Property Manager [www.irem.org](http://www.irem.org)  
**CRS®** Certified Residential Specialist [www.crs.com](http://www.crs.com)  
**e-PRO®** Internet Professionalism [www.epronar.com](http://www.epronar.com)  
**GRI** Graduate REALTOR® Institute [REALTOR.org/GRI](http://REALTOR.org/GRI)

**RSPS** Resort & Second Home Specialist [REALTOR.org/resorts](http://REALTOR.org/resorts)

**SIOR** Society of Industrial and Office REALTORS® [www.sior.com](http://www.sior.com)

**SRES** Seniors Real Estate Specialist [www.seniorsrealestate.com](http://www.seniorsrealestate.com)

## Getting Your Sea Legs

This is the first of three marketing plans, (the [second](#) and [third](#) are for salespeople with higher budgets), and is designed for real estate professionals who have between \$2,000 and \$5,000 to spend on marketing over six months. The most effective way to allocate limited funds is through a clear, focused social media ad campaign. Consider this plan the foundation for salespeople of all budget levels.

**Objective:** Create an impactful online presence that will quickly generate enough cash flow to allow for the longer-term marketing approach of Plan Two.

Month One

A co-worker used a smartphone to shoot this agent profile of Michael Harris, REALTOR® at Realty Executives Dillon in Chula Vista, CA. In the video, Harris describes his real estate background, life experiences in the U.S. Navy, and love of old cars.

1. Plan your person brand—and not your company's brand—by identifying who you are, how you're unique, and what you can offer that clients want. Remember, you can't be all things to all people, so take a stand.
2. Get to know your geography farm. Pick the neighborhood you live in or one you are familiar with and/or eager to learn more about. Go see every house that is for sale. Be the first to see every new listing. No one should know more about your neighborhood than you. The most impressive agent is the one who knows everything about the house for sale down the street. And, best of all, being this agent doesn't cost you a penny.
3. Identify an ideal demographic, such as teachers, lawyers, or doctors. Think long and hard about the types of people you know and who you want to target. You may already be in touch with a natural pool of people.
4. Understanding which social media sites cater to your demographic will help determine where you want to plan an ad. For \$500, you can get 500 clicks on Facebook. But if you are going after a professional demographic, such as attorneys, you might be better off with an ad on LinkedIn.
5. Establish a personal page or profile on your chosen social network. Use the first month to get an in-depth understand of what kinds of posts are popular and who the users are. If the users don't fit your target demographic, switch to a new social media platform and try again.
6. Unless you are an accomplished copywriter, start looking for a professional who can develop a single landing page for your ads. An ad isn't worth anything if it doesn't take the clicker to an engaging page. Expect to spend between \$700 and \$1,500 for a fully designed and professionally written landing page.
7. Have a co-worker film a Q&A session with you using equipment as simple as your smartphone. Post the video on your social media sites, (and prepare to include it on your landing page once designed and written). This video will not only allow potential clients the opportunity to learn more about you, but will also introduce you to the neighborhood as a friendly face of real estate.

## Month Two

1. Finalize the social networks you are going to use to promote content. Don't try to get on every social network. Pick one or two and really focus on these. Don't replicate your postings because they will ring hollow. Instead, devise a content strategy for each one. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest are the big sites to consider.
2. Working with a professional writer if necessary, determine what your landing page is going to say, and create a catchy story to bring viewers in. If your ad is for teachers, your landing page might tell the 500-word story of a teacher who bought a house and how he or she did so in this market. Be sure to include a simple step for teachers who are interested in buying by requesting their name and address. E-mails are less desirable as people can easily drop your follow-ups into spam.

Avoid asking for a phone number—people are more likely to share their address without this.

3.

"Our assistant filmed the video with his iPhone. We posted it on our YouTube TV channel named 'Price Aamodt Team' on an Internet TV show we call 'What I Would Buy Today'. We posted the video on Facebook and e-mailed it to a few chosen clients. It had over 90 views in a few days, and over 240 views so far. The ultimate buyer instructed their designer to view it to help their redesign. He and his staff viewed it several times in an effort to assist with the renovation that began immediately after closing. We now use it for listing presentations." —The Price Aamodt Real Estate Team, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Month Three

1. Launch your landing page in conjunction with your social media ad.
2. Create a letter on a personalized letterhead to follow up with your leads. The letter should not be a resume, but rather another catchy message to your targeted demographic. The purpose of this letter is to emerge from the realm of social media as a tangible entity and leader; someone who can physically guide people to their new homes. By reaching out to potential clients in print, you are essentially taking them to the next level. If you stay consistent with these simple print follow-ups for 3 to 6 months, you will generate a steady flow of business. "Print is the greatest closing tool for online advertising," Herder says.
3. Begin to consistently post on your social media sites. Offer links to resourceful articles and photos of homes you find interesting in your farm. Make your posts engaging, conversational, and helpful rather than a barrage of listings.

Month Four

1. Monitor your social media ads and presence. Focus on testing many different things. Experiment with alternative content, and try to update at different times on different days. Find out which call to action works the best and gets the greatest response.
2. Start an organized log of all inquiries, leads, and phone calls. If a specific tactic is not delivering, switch it up a bit.

Month Five

1. Continue to monitor your ads and social media presence.
2. Continue to send print letters on letterhead to leads generated from your landing page.

3. Mail a customized follow-up letter with a reminder to leads if you have not heard from them.

#### Month Six

1. Take a simple mobile phone video of a listing that might appeal to your target demographic and upload it to YouTube. Include your contact information at the end of the video.
2. Promote this video link on your social media sites.
3. Mail a postcard to your leads that promotes this video and sends them to your YouTube link.

## Driving to Success

A mid-level salesperson has a budget of approximately \$1,500 a month to spend on marketing. This does not mean the salesperson should abandon the practices recommended in the [previous article](#); rather, these practices should be expanded upon. In theory, this marketing plan could carry a mid-level salesperson for the rest of his or her career, or could generate the funds necessary to execute the [superstar marketing plan](#) outlined later in this tool kit.

Follow the same steps and timeline as the limited-fund salesperson, but with these additional measures.

**Objective:** Establish consistent, permanent, name recognition and deal flow that will lead to new and repeat business and generate a stable level of income.

"A landing page is created for a single call to action. Agents may create landing pages for each listing using "thepropertyaddress.com" as the domain name. Agents may create stealth landing pages for "What is my home worth?" Because a landing page is a single call to action, it can be faster to create and publish on the web. It can also be more effective in capturing leads, since the Web site visitor doesn't get distracted by content that is irrelevant to them." —Kayla Levin, Marketing Director for [Rich Levin's Success Corps Inc.](#)

#### Month One

1. Determine your primary call to action and become intimately familiar with the personal brand you plan to promote.
2. Get to know your geography farm. Become a familiar face at all open houses and neighborhood or community meetings.
3. Identify your target demographic.



4. Study the top social media sites to dete

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- etermine where you want to run your ads and create personal profiles. When you buy an ad, you pay for clicks. Plan to run at least one ad a month at approximately \$500 an ad.
5. Hire a Web-savvy professional who can set up your landing page (where your ads will take leads) to complement your professional Web site. Expect to spend a minimum of \$2,000 for a basic site, although a better range to aim for is \$3,000 to \$4,000 for a custom high-quality, interactive Web site. Keep in mind that, according to Herder, the cheap template Web sites simply do not grab people's attention. Your landing page should include a link to your site's home page and social media pages, as well as your e-mail address and phone number, which should all be listed at the top of the page.
  6. Start plotting how often you want to post content on your Web site, what kinds of blog items in the real estate world appeal to potential clients and drive traffic, and what resources you would like to include on your site.
  7. Hire a copywriter and designer to create a color brochure that you can use to follow-up on leads from your landing page. A tri-page color brochure will cost you between \$1,000 and \$1,800 for the basic design, plus printing costs. Herder says his company charges between \$3,000 to \$5,000 for a brochure. This brochure should not read as a resume but as a prospecting tool. It should include a link to your Web site.
  8. If you are not doing so already, establish a monthly plan to send out a personal letter to past clients.

Month Two



1. Finalize your content development plan.
2. Determine the social networks you are going to use to promote content. Pick one or two and really focus on those.
3. Finalize your landing page and Web site design.
4. Finalize and sign off on your brochure. Allow at least two weeks for copy and two weeks for design.
5. Go live with your Web site before the end of this month. You want to drive all traffic to this site and push it to garner search engine recommendations.

### Month Three

1. Go live with your landing page and social media profiles.
2. Launch your social media ad(s) so they are current with your landing page and online presence.
3. Immediately follow up on leads generated from your ads with color brochures.

4. Mail your brochure to your sphere of influence with a nice cover letter telling them that you have just completed a new marketing brochure and would love feedback on whether the brochure accurately reflects your personality. This is not a sales letter!
5. Hold an open house every Saturday or Sunday and hand out brochures.
6. Post regularly on your chosen social media sites. Keep your banter cheerful yet informative. Offer links to resourceful articles and photos of homes you find interesting in your farm. Review a cool new restaurant in your target neighborhood, or mention the fresh flowers in a nearby coffee shop.

7. Write—or post cont



**Lana Fitzpatrick**  
**Banker Orinda**

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📍 5 Moraga Way, Orinda, CA.  
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23 minutes ago 🌐

Solid News - For the first time in almost six years, markets experienced sustained increases in home

ent written by your copywriter—on your Web site. Try to update something on your site every day, but make sure that you have new articles and links at least once a week.

#### Month Four

"An agent needs to have a personal Web site. It functions as their online resume, business card, and source of real estate intelligence that keeps working even when the agent is not working. In addition to the agent's primary Web site, single use landing pages can increase lead flow and opportunity." —Kayla Levin

1. Monitor your social media ads and your social media presence. This is the month for testing to see what call to action worked the best.
2. Keep an organized log of all inquiries, leads, and phone calls.
3. Continue to post original material on social media and your blog about news and neighborhood happenings.
4. Have a mailing system established where you are regularly sending print materials to the people you advertise to on social media. This physical direct mail list should lead to more clicks.

#### Month Five

1. Repeats steps 1 through 4 from Month Four.
2. Mail a customized follow-up letter to leads if you have not heard from them.
- 3.

This video was shot with an iPhone by REALTOR® Lisa Marchant Harris of Lisa Harris Realty in Loganville, GA.

#### Month Six

1. Take a simple mobile phone video of a listing that might appeal to your target demographic and upload it to YouTube. The YouTube service is absolutely free and the site makes it relatively simple to upload files with little to no prior experience. Or, if you have some money left in your budget, hire an amateur videographer to shoot the video. This could cost as low as \$100 for a basic filming. Extras, such as music and titles, can be added on, but you can expect to have a decent video for well under \$500. Include your contact information at the end of the video.
2. Promote this video on your social media sites.
3. Mail a postcard to your leads that promotes this video.



## Becoming A Star

Once a REALTOR® has surpassed both [the limited-funds salesperson](#) financial constraints and [the mid-level salesperson](#) budgetary restrictions, there's not much separating him or her from personal marketing superstardom. By this point, the successful salesperson already has a firm target audience and a brochure mailing system that is working. Chances are, the successful salesperson has a large sphere of influence online and is a well-known name in certain neighborhoods. What he or she may not have, however, is an online presence that is interlocked with the local media landscape.

**Objective:** To generate at least 200 transactions a year, which should result in between \$20 million and \$30 million in gross annual sales.

FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET, THERE'S  
NO CHALLENGE TOO GREAT FOR

# Priscila

R O D R I G U E Z

When she steps outside into the early morning air, before sunrise, Priscila Rodriguez has already accomplished something. There's no better way to start her day than with a brisk jog through her community. But, it's not exercise that fuels this local businesswoman and it's not just the challenge of rising before the sun. For Priscila, it's proving that she can face any obstacle that comes her way.

## Stepping Up

Even though she has such an active lifestyle, Priscila continues to make goals that benefit the people around her. As a working mother, she knows



how important quality time is with her son, Noah, which is why she and her husband, Juan, commit to daily breakfasts and walks in the park. "Being a mother can be challenging at times," she says. "But, it's also the greatest gift I've ever received." Making a difference in the lives of her family is Priscila's biggest priority.

## The Two Step

Born and raised in the San Diego area, Priscila can't imagine living anywhere else. For her, it's the perfect community to raise a family, establish oneself and raise the bar of excellence. When she's not

*No matter what day it is, Priscila makes time to live an active life with her family.*

priscila

R

*"I approach life with confidence and determination. And, that's what my clients experience when I assist them with their important investment."*



## Month One

1. Start looking for a professional videographer who understands the art and science of real estate. You want to produce sleek films of your listings that tell a story. Study other agents' films in the high-end bracket to see what is stunning—and what doesn't work at that level.
2. Hire a script writer to create an engaging storyline for your marketing video.
3. Find a marketing agency or create an in-house marketing arm. You should have a marketing person who can help you tie together your print, online, and outside media presence.
4. Scope out industry magazines that are focused on your target demographic. For example, if you target teachers, find a magazine published by the National Education Association and price out the ads for particular zip codes. Ask your copywriter and designer to create an ad that has the same look and feel as your Facebook page, your social media ads, and your Web site.

## Month Two

1. Be ready to explore any new network that pops up. As a high-volume salesperson, you should plan to be an early-adopter of effective new tools as they become available.
2. Scope a location site with your scriptwriter and videographer for a sophisticated video. This first film is important because it will solidify your reputation.
3. Launch industry magazine ad, making sure it links to your online presence.

## Month Three

1. Continue looking for ways to integrate into higher-priced media choices.
2. Film your listings with your videographer and add a targeted-audience spin. If it's an ad for teachers, interview a teacher (client) about buying a house. Make sure your contact information is listed at the end of the video, but don't just list a phone number with a directive to call if ready to buy or sell. That may be perceived as too aggressive. You want to build a trusting relationship with your viewers, so include with that phone number a Facebook link and your Web site as well. These are places they can go to comfortably gather more information—and hopefully leave an address behind for further contact.
3. Have an experienced editor work on your video to ensure good sound and flow, smooth transitions, and catchy music where appropriate.

## Month Four

1. Post your video on YouTube or Vimeo.
2. Post your video on your Web site and social media pages.

3. Send out a brochure with a video link that promotes your work. The key in today's marketplace is to link together all types of media connections so that potential leads are seeing your name in a variety of platforms.
4. Immediately replace any old social media ads with new ones that drive traffic not only to your landing page, but also to this video.
- 5.

Wayne Turner, broker and owner of the Turner Real Estate Group in Mandeville, LA ran this ad as one of two spots that played on a local radio station.

#### Month Five

1. Continue running ads, blogging, maintaining your social media presence, and mailing print brochures with regularity.
2. Now that your video is up and running, seek out other platforms for it to be shown. Contact your local movie theaters to ask about running it prior to a show. If not that video, discuss pricing for a photographic ad.
3. Now is also the time to consider running a television and/or radio ad in your region. Make sure that you have a stellar Web site in place where leads will go after seeing or hearing this ad. Place the ad this month so that you can see the results by the end of month six.
4. Establish a log that measures online traffic and lead generation, and ties together all your platforms, from industry magazine ads and radio to the web copy and brochures.

#### Month Six

1. Continue with the steps from month five.
2. Start planning for an annual appreciation event for your past clients and referrals. Hire an event planner to make this an extravaganza that people will not want to miss.
3. Evaluate the number of transactions you have completed in the past six months, and compare them with last year's results. Analyze your cost per transaction from marketing.

