

Individual Property Websites

2010

White Paper: Individual Property Websites

Properties Online, LLC has compiled important statistical information for the real estate community. Statistical sources include the 2009 Profile of Home Buyers & Sellers, from the National Association of REALTORS®, the California Association of REALTORS, and over 3 million website visitor statistics from over 15 thousand single property websites.

Individual Property Websites

WHITE PAPER: INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY WEBSITES

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What Are Property Websites?

A property website is a website that is fully dedicated to featuring a single property. The property's street address becomes the website's URL. For example, the URL for a house located at 555 Main Street will be www.555MainStreet.com.

A typical property website becomes a one-stop destination for anyone interested in the property. It includes all the listing data, photographs, the agent's contact details, and many different built-in tools that help to efficiently market the property.

Five Quick Facts About Property Websites

Sellers love property websites. Sellers love individual property websites because they give them the feeling that the agent has worked really hard to feature their home in the best possible way. Filled with images, rich text, floor plans, neighborhood information and mortgage tools, single property websites have a professional look and convey a strong message of "Look at what I can do for you!"

Buyers love property websites. For homebuyers, this is a matter of convenience. Being able to type the property's street address into their browser's URL field and gain immediate access to a site filled with all the information they'll ever need about the property saves buyers time and helps them make an informed decision.

Property sites are easy to set up. Despite being so impressive to both sellers and buyers, the little secret that agents don't tell their clients is that single property websites, such as the websites offered by Listing Domains, are very easy to set up. A typical property website, filled with text, images and tools, takes less than a half an hour to set up, yet looks extremely professional.

Individual property websites are affordable. The ROI on each single property website is extremely high. For a one-time fee of \$60, agents who set up a Listing Domains property site get a high-quality, professional looking website that stays up for a full year and helps them secure listings, keep sellers happy, attract buyers, and establish themselves as Internet-savvy real estate professionals.

Property websites facilitate viral online marketing. One of the great benefits of online real estate marketing is the ability to use social networks to create viral marketing campaigns. More and more agents are discovering that featuring a property on social networking sites is a great way to get people to spread the word about it. Single property websites such as those offered by Listing Domains include built-in, easy to use tools for sharing properties on a wide range of social networks.

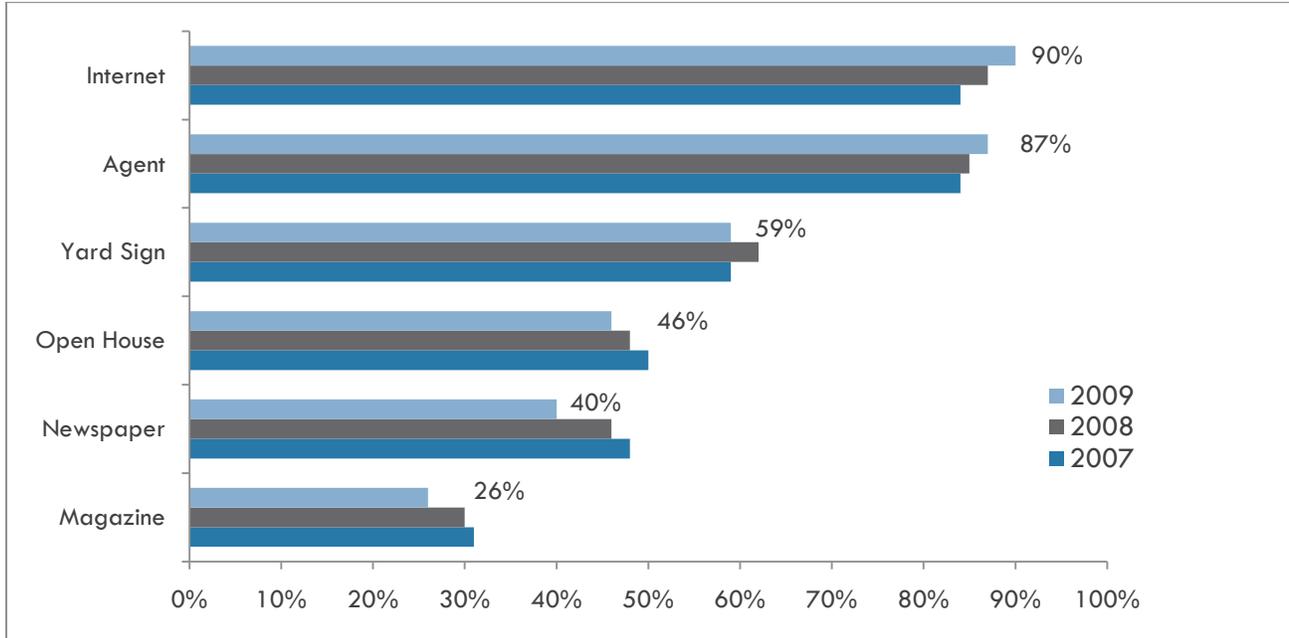
The Home Search Process is Moving Online

According to a new Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers, recently released by the National Association of REALTORS®, the Internet has become an essential and indispensable tool in the home search process.

- More than one third of buyers began their search for a home by looking online for properties for sale.
- 90% of home buyers used the Internet as one of the information sources in their home search process.
- The Internet continues to be increasingly popular among all homebuyers, while traditional real estate marketing methods such as print media are declining.
- In 2009, 36 percent of buyers reported that they found their home online, up from 32 percent in 2008.

How Buyers Search for Property

Information Sources used in Home Search



It's important for real estate professionals to understand that the Internet is not replacing them. On the contrary – according to the NAR study, 89% of buyers who used the Internet, also used a real estate agent. And the vast majority of homebuyers still purchase their home through a real estate agent.

It's not that the Internet is replacing agents, but agents who want to stay current and on top of their game need to harness the power of the Internet and use it as part of their real estate marketing campaigns.

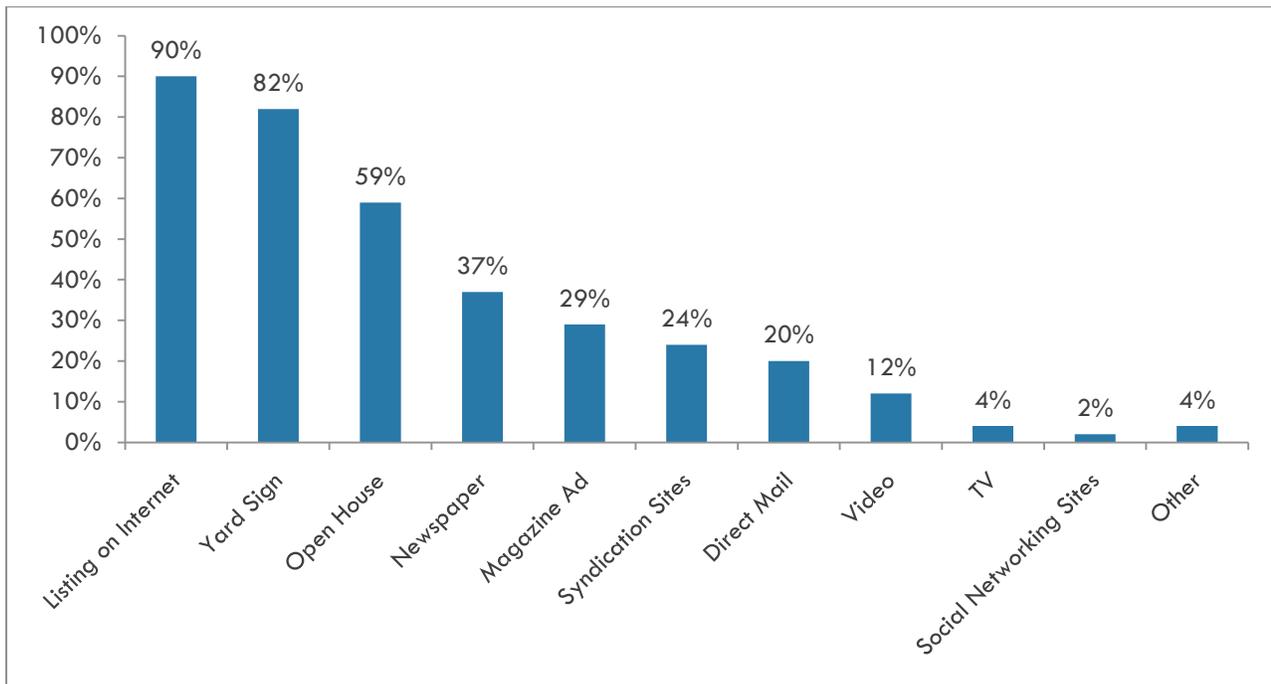
How Property Websites Help Agents Win Listings

In recent years, real estate professionals have had to quickly adjust to major shifts in the way the real estate market behaves. As mentioned above, a large majority of homebuyers are now using the Internet to search for homes. People EXPECT to find property information online. The easier it is for them to find that information, the more willing they are to consider a property seriously.

Sellers know that the real estate market has become a high-tech market, and that effectively marketing their property must include online marketing. When sellers see that an agent is willing to go above and beyond and create a full website for their property, they are always impressed (of course, they don't know how easy it actually is to set up a single property website!).

Marketing Real Estate

Methods Real Estate Agent Used to Market Home

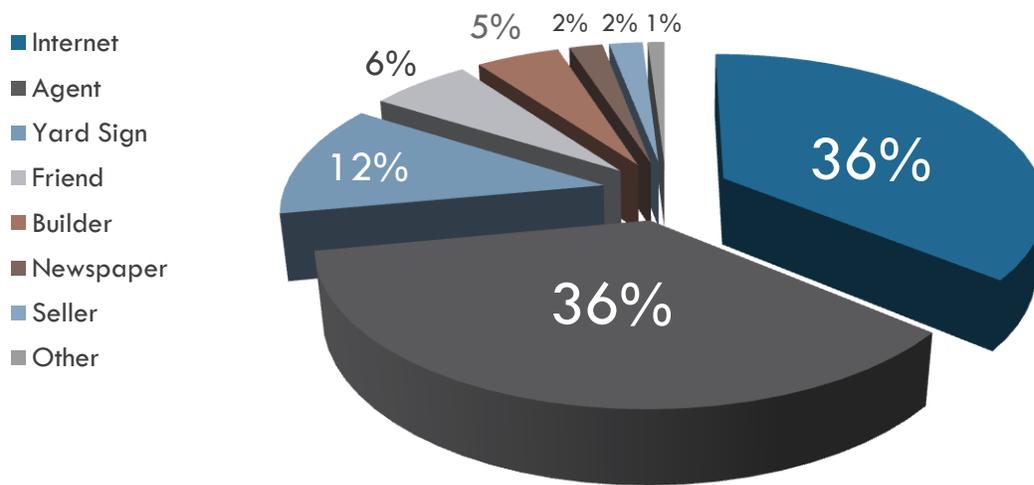


Single property website providers such as Listing Domains are now allowing agents to create free demo sites as an excellent way to impress potential customers and secure listings. Demo websites allow agents to create a website for prospects prior to getting the listing. Just like a live property website, the demo website can be filled with unlimited photos and documents and can feature music, a voice over, a video and more. Agents can then email prospects a link to the demo site, or demo the site live at the listing presentation. Once an agent gets the listing, they can purchase the property website.

According to the National Association of REALTORS®, in 2009 the Internet was the third most common way for buyers to find an agent. Since Listing Domains property websites stay live for a full year, even after the property has been sold, they become a great way for real estate professionals to showcase their work for previous clients and to establish themselves as savvy realtors who are experts at all aspects of real estate online marketing. This helps them attract future clients who have seen their work, are impressed by it, and want the same for their own home.

Where Buyers Come From

Where Buyer Found the Home they Purchased

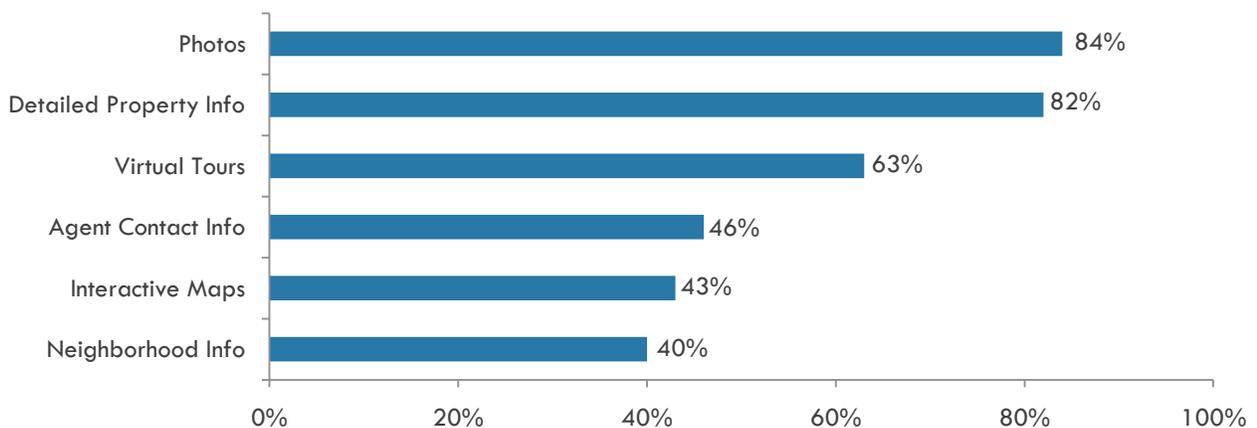


Why Property Websites Help Attract Buyers

Buyers today are looking to find as much information as they can about a property prior to seeing it. According to the National Association of REALTORS®, more than 80% of buyers found photos and detailed information about the property “very useful” when searching for a home. Naturally, since so many homebuyers have Internet access and are Internet savvy, the first place they go to is the Web - but properties can easily get lost on traditional MLS and agency websites.

What Buyers Like

What buyers deem "Very Useful"



Creating a dedicated, one-stop Internet destination for those buyers is one of the best ways to grab their attention and make them truly explore a property. Many homebuyers are simply typing a home’s address into their browser’s URL field or into the search engine’s search box. When a property has an individual website with the property’s address as the URL, search engines typically index that property website as the most [relevant](#) search result. This means that creating a single property website is the best way to ensure that homebuyers can easily find online information about a property.

Once those buyers browse the property website and learn everything they need to know about a property, they often call the agent to schedule a private tour. At this point, the agent knows that they're dealing with highly qualified buyers – buyers who saw the house online, know everything they need to know about it, and actually LIKE the house.

What's in a (Domain) Name?

When you create a single property website, your website should have its very own property address domain name. For example, if the listing's address is 425 Maple Ave, the domain name will be www.425MapleAve.com.

Having a custom domain name for your single property website has several important benefits. First of all, it is important in terms of search engine optimization, because you want people who look for details on this particular property to find your website. Ideally you want your website to be the first search engine result for the listing's address – and a property website with a custom domain name increases the likelihood that this will be the case.

In addition, having an entire website dedicated to their listing, including a custom domain name, makes clients VERY happy. It shows dedication, professionalism and knowledge about the latest tools in real estate marketing. Buyers are also impressed by property websites with custom domains, for similar reasons – it gives them all the info they need in one place, and it demonstrates professionalism and attention to detail.

A property website with a custom domain name will make your listing stand out in the crowd. Make sure you take advantage of this valuable feature.

Are Property Websites Affordable?

With all their rich features and professional looking interface, you would think that property websites would be expensive and only suitable for top-performing realtors. But property websites are actually very affordable, and can easily be employed as an online marketing tool by every real estate agent, across all their listings.

A professional-looking property website, filled with unlimited images, text, audio, video and more, costs just \$60 for an entire year. There are no monthly fees, no hidden costs of any kind, and the website stays up - and serves as a great testimonial to the agent's marketing abilities - for a full year. The top-level domain name makes it easy for buyers to find the site, and makes sellers extremely happy, and more likely to recommend their agent to future clients. Since, according to the National Association of REALTORS®, referrals are the top way for people to find a real estate agent, making sellers happy is of course a big priority.

Another major plus is that each Listing Domains single property website includes a custom sign rider for the property, so agents who use single property sites don't have to order those separately. The combination of the sign rider and the property website works beautifully to market the home. The property's URL is clearly depicted on the lawn sign rider located at the property itself. Homebuyers can drive by a property they like, then go directly to the URL listed on the rider to find a wealth of information about the home prior to scheduling a private tour. Yard signs remain an important real estate marketing method that complements online marketing. According to the National Association of REALTORS®, 82% percent of sellers in 2009 used a yard sign.

The ROI on single property websites is high not only because agents pay a one-time fee that includes a sign rider. Property websites also pay them dividends in the form of gaining them new clients, who see the sites they've created, whether through links on the agent's main site or through friends and acquaintances, and want the same

marketing for their own home. Existing property websites provide valuable long-term positioning for real estate professionals as tech-savvy marketers and demonstrate their marketing capabilities to potential clients.

Property Websites or Virtual Tours?

Virtual tours were all the rage a few years ago, and they still work to some extent, but they are gradually being replaced by individual listing websites.

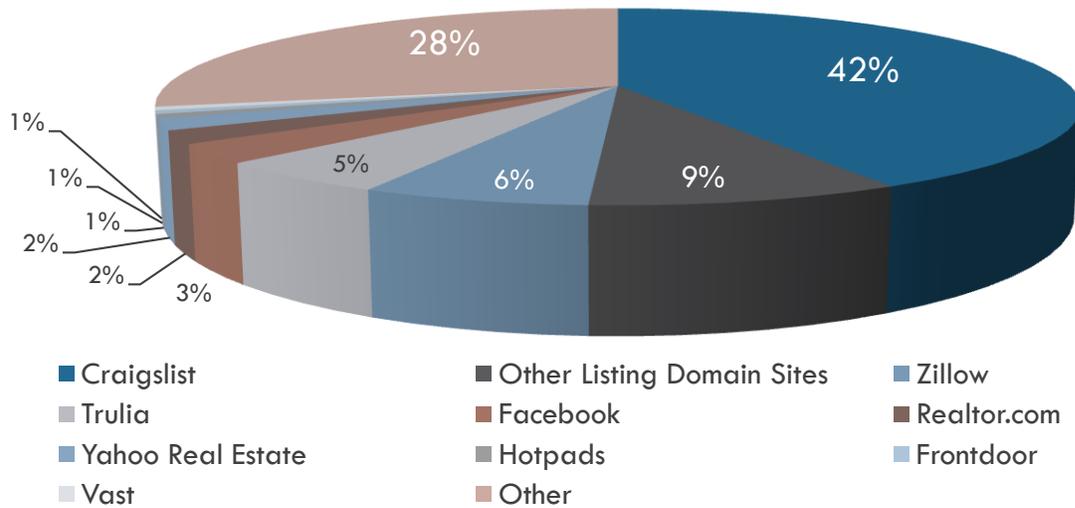
Property websites are a better marketing tool than virtual tours for several reasons. First off, they contain more information about the property including unlimited photos. Secondly, they are easier to find. Virtual tours are directed at buyers who have already seen the property someplace else (on the agent's site, for example, or in the MLS listings). Virtual tours don't generate traffic in their own right.

On the other hand, property websites generate their own direct traffic in several ways:

- People who see the sign rider on the physical property's lawn, then go online to check it out.
- The seller telling their friends and family to go check out their property at the single property site.
- The agent, the seller and their friends and family posting and reposting a link to the property site on various social networks.
- Organic search engine queries for the property's physical address, where the property site comes up as the first, most relevant search result.

Where Traffic is Coming From

From a total of 3,477,867 website referrals to Listing Domain Websites



Property Websites Are Not Just About Properties

While the classic use of property websites is for showcasing single properties, they are flexible enough that agents can use them in many exciting ways. For example, agents can create a single property website that is actually about an entire neighborhood, a school, or a city. If an agent specializes in a specific type of real estate, such as high-end properties or entry-level homes, they can create an entire website, filled with images, text, audio and video, that showcases their expertise.

Other uses for single property websites include creating a website to promote specific events such as a buyers' seminar, a fund raiser, or anything else that the agent wants to get out there and promote online using the many convenient built-in tools that single property websites provide. The options are limitless.

Benefits of Built-In Social Networking Tools

One of the most useful features of individual listing websites is the ability to quickly and easily add listings to social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

Social networking is a new and exciting form of online marketing. It utilizes viral methods of marketing to create a natural buzz around a property. Essentially, social media marketing is a lot like old-fashioned word-of-mouth marketing, but it is done on a much larger scale thanks to the wide reach of the Internet.

For example, if an agent has been active on Facebook and has a couple hundred friends there, they can post each single property website to their Facebook profile to let people know about it. A percentage of these people will like what they see and spread the word, either in person to their friends and family, or online, on their own social networks.

Posting single property sites to Facebook is especially easy for Listing Domains clients, since it can be done automatically via a Facebook app that allows agents to add all of their listings to their profile page. Once they add the listings through the app, their Facebook profile will dynamically update as they add, edit or remove properties from their Listing Domains account.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The vast majority of homebuyers today are using the Internet to search for homes. Making it easy for them to find listings is therefore a top priority for real estate agents.

- A property website is an easy, affordable way to market a single listing online and to make it easier for homebuyers to find it.
- Sellers love property websites because they give them the feeling that the agent has worked hard to feature their home in the best possible way. Thus, using a property website helps encourage client loyalty and create future referrals.
- Buyers love property websites because they provide a one-stop destination where they can get all the information they need about a property.
- Property sites are easy to set up, although by looking at them, you would think each of them took hours to create.
- Property websites are very affordable and provide a high ROI in the form of securing listings, keeping sellers happy, attracting buyers, and helping agents to establish themselves as Internet-savvy real estate professionals.
- Single property websites help create viral marketing campaigns in social media.
- Property websites are more useful than virtual tours as a form of online marketing because they generate their own online traffic.
- Internet media expertise can be a strong differentiator that enables agents to gain market share. Savvy real estate professionals who wish to differentiate themselves from the crowd and are unwilling to be left behind should adopt the use of online real estate marketing in general, and single property sites in particular, as soon as possible. The longer they wait, the harder it will be for them to get into the game and to compete with agents who have already established themselves as Internet marketing pros.

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