

MIDYEAR EDITION

**2012**  
**Real Estate**  
**Business Plan**

## Summer Success Toolkit



This business plan provides you with more information, strategies, and a road map for real estate success in the second half of 2012—courtesy of Market Leader.

# Do You Have A Plan for Long-Term Success?

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Whether you're an agent or you run an office, it's crucial that you have the resources in place to effectively run your business and drive today's consumers directly to you.

In our 2012 mid-year business plan, we'll focus on tools that will ensure your survival in the real estate industry—tools that Market Leader offers in one seamless solution. Learn how your website, contact management, marketing strategy, and team members can easily work together to keep your business ahead of the competition. You'll also find worksheets and exercises that will keep you on track to meeting your goals.

It's time to kick-start your business and take your success to the next level. Let Market Leader's strategies and solutions get you there.

Included in this midyear edition of the Real Estate Business Plan:

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Receive a complimentary business consultation from Market Leader and create a road map for organizing your second half of 2012 business plan.

Please call us to schedule your consultation:

Independent agents:  
800-980-8139

Managing brokers  
or teams: 888-240-3060



## Fundamentals for Real Estate Survival and Success

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If you're a real estate agent, broker, or team leader, the only way to last in this competitive industry is by having a combination of the right tools to support and grow your business. Four key fundamentals are crucial to your survival and ultimate success. When they're in place, you'll be far ahead of the curve in reaching today's online consumers and dominating the competition.

These tools are the foundation of every forward-thinking real estate business: an integrated marketing strategy that uses both print and online media, an eye-catching website capable of capturing and engaging motivated leads, a CRM system that helps manage and respond to every prospect, and—if you're a broker or team leader—superstar agents that you can entice to stay with you over the long-term.

Everything in your real estate arsenal must work together as a unit—one solution that ensures your real estate survival and helps you maintain a smoothly running, productive business. Once you have the means to easily capture, engage, manage and convert homebuyers and sellers, you'll have no trouble recruiting and retaining a powerhouse team that will help you build your business and your profits.

*"I couldn't succeed without Market Leader. At least 25–30% of my business comes from them. I appreciate that the website is so user friendly, and my prospects are empowered to do their own searches but I can see exactly what they are viewing."*

**Johnny L.**  
EXIT Realty, Tampa, FL

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## Printed Materials as Part of Your Marketing Strategy: Outdated Or Underrated?

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There was a time when every marketing need could be met with a shiny, full-color brochure, flyer, poster, or billboard. Marketing budgets were flush with money for these products, business was booming for commercial printers, and countertops at open houses were filled with acres of colorful collateral.

As the Internet gained steam over the last 10 years, it became easier and easier to create your own marketing campaigns and get your message across online. In the 21st century, we're now inundated with a multitude of options like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Craigslist, brokerage and individual agent websites, banner advertising, and the list goes on. In fact, there are so many options that it can be confusing and overwhelming, even for the most tech savvy among us.

Print's biggest detractors argue that hard-copy marketing materials are too expensive to produce and distribute. On the flip side, there are many agents that perceive online marketing as too time-consuming to take on. But the successful real estate professional finds a balance—that happy medium of cost-effective communication to consumers with the right message at the right time.

Consider these best practices for integrating both print marketing and online communication tools into your overall marketing strategy.

### Print marketing strategies:

- **Be targeted about your messaging and audience.** Paper, printing, and postage are expensive. Don't waste time and money sending blanket mailings to your whole town or neighborhood. Choose a specific area of expertise or a message you want to convey, and then find the right audience. For example, if you specialize in foreclosures and short sales, develop a postcard explaining your success in that niche, and then send it to an ultra-targeted list of consumers who are looking for a bargain property, interested in investment properties, or have purchased distressed properties in the past.
- **Be deliberate when choosing the type of print collateral you will use.** Recognize that not everything needs to be printed. Some of the most successful pieces to print include business cards, stationary or letterhead, and informative, attractive brochures. Business cards are still the go-to networking tool. Stationary and letterhead are important for adding a personal touch to your communication with clients and prospects. Lastly, a beautiful tri-panel brochure has enough space for lots of text and big photos in a small amount of space.
- **Share the cost.** Most likely, you already have good business relationships with title companies, mortgage brokers, home inspectors, or other non-competitive vendors in your area. Consider developing a monthly newsletter that features these partners and split the production and distribution costs—you'll save money and generate new leads at the same time—everybody wins.
- **Find someone else to do the heavy lifting.** Many real estate professionals have stopped buying advertising space in magazines—you'll notice this when you pick up almost any publication and see how much thinner it is than it used to

*"I have built my entire business around Market Leader. It helps me prioritize clients, keep track of leads, and shape the way I spend my workday. I owe a great deal of my professional success to Market Leader."*

**Aubree H.**  
Coldwell Banker® Bain  
Kirkland, WA

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be. But, one thing that magazines have going for them is that the publisher has already spent lots of money cultivating the prized key readership. When you find a publication whose audience fits your key demographic, don't hesitate to take out an ad. The publisher is doing the work for you. As an added bonus, with fewer ads in most magazines these days, yours is less likely to get overlooked!

- **Invest in powerful design and messaging.** If you are going to spend actual dollars on print advertising, make sure you're creating quality pieces. Consider hiring a professional graphic designer and copywriter or proofreader to work on your marketing collateral. Or, use pre-designed templates that make customizing easy. You'll end up with smart, aesthetically-pleasing pieces that get your message across.
- **Be budget-conscious.** Shop around. With the decline in the use of printed materials across many industries, print shops are eager for your business. Most printers offer great deals, especially for new customers. Look into online printers as well. You upload your final design, and they print and ship your collateral. Most have weekly, if not daily, specials.
- **Print marketing is not an island.** Many people consider their print and digital efforts to be entirely separate from one another. This is a mistake. Make your print and digital campaigns part of a comprehensive strategy. Use a contact management system to make sure you're sending your most qualified leads a mix of targeted, time-sensitive initiatives. Also, consider leveraging your print creative for use in your digital campaigns. You'll be developing a specific aesthetic and brand across many channels while saving money on new design and copy.
- **Cross-promote yourself.** Include contact information for your website, email address, Twitter feed, or Facebook page on your printed materials. For many consumers, this is how they would prefer to contact you.
- **Track your results.** Social media and websites make it easy to track your site visitors and ROI. Don't let this data go unnoticed just because you're using print collateral. For example, set up a single property website or virtual home tour with analytic capabilities and send out a print campaign that directs people to that site specifically, instead of your main website. Use the data to keep track of traffic on this site. You'll immediately know how successful your campaign has been.

### Online marketing strategies:

- **Launch a lead-capture website.** If you're a motivated real estate agent, you need a personalized website to strengthen your brand and capture more leads. IDX technology allows visitors to easily search and view MLS properties without leaving your site—giving you a competitive edge in your local real estate market.
- **Stand out with user-friendly marketing templates.** Today's agents don't need to be graphic designers to stand out from the competition. Cutting-edge online marketing tools help you create and edit polished greeting cards, postcards, flyers, and newsletters for email or print marketing—with just a few clicks.

*“Market Leader is by far the single best investment I have made in my real estate career. It is so much more than just a lead generation tool. It brings lead tracking and agent accountability to a whole new level.”*

**Keith R.**  
Keller Williams, Spokane, WA

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- **Win business by blogging.** A blog is a popular type of interactive website that makes it easy to post information and updates online while encouraging comments from visitors. Target the content of your blog to your particular niche—your neighborhood, for instance. Build rapport by sharing photos, neighborhood news, and market statistics.
- **Start a Facebook page.** Facebook can be a powerful source of new business for you and a quick way for consumers to share your real estate information. Use this massive social media site more effectively to promote your business, share listings, and tap into millions of buyer and seller leads.
- **Post properties on Craigslist.** Millions of consumers visit Craigslist each month, making this free classifieds site one of the most effective marketing and lead-generation tools for real estate professionals. With Craigslist, you can post a new listing along with a link that takes visitors directly to the property on your lead-capture website.
- **Send out e-newsletters.** Online newsletters are simple to design, and you can send them monthly to your contacts—highlighting local market data, insider tips, and useful strategies for buyers and sellers. It's a great way to establish yourself as a local expert.
- **Showcase your listings with virtual tours.** Using text, photos, and music, you can easily take prospective buyers on a beautiful “virtual tour” of any home listing. Different design templates help you make every home and every tour unique.
- **Purchase pay-per-click ads.** Pay-per-click advertising is a cost-effective way to target your audience and bring traffic directly to your site through Google, Bing, and other search engines. Work with an established vendor that will guarantee a certain number of leads. The best thing is that you'll only pay when someone clicks your ad and visits your website.
- **Set up automated campaigns.** Launch targeted, automated email campaigns for your entire database or specialized groups—first-time homebuyers, holidays, birthdays, and more. The latest “set it and forget it” technology is ideal for real estate professionals who want to save time and money.

Printed marketing campaigns are not becoming obsolete, to the relief of agents everywhere. And while online marketing may seem overrated to some, it is becoming an increasingly influential part of your overall marketing and branding strategy. When careful attention is paid to the medium, the message, the audience, and the intended goal, both print and online marketing can peacefully coexist, combining to be a powerful part of your business strategy.

Market Leader provides real estate professionals with powerful marketing solutions designed to help them gain the competitive edge. To learn more, contact us at 1-800-980-8139 (agents) or 1-888-240-3060 (brokers).

*“I have been with Market Leader for a year now and I have sold \$4,500,000 of real estate compared to last year's \$1,800,000. And with over \$4,700,000 in active listings to date, my business overall has tripled.”*

**Katrina B.**  
Prudential Real Estate,  
Anchorage, AK

# Why Some Websites Are Better Lead Converters than Others

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It seems like some websites have it all figured out—sophisticated design, compelling text, simple but effective lead conversion, visually pleasing listings, and plenty of new content. Is there a magical “it factor” for real estate websites? How can I make my website more effective? What if I don’t have a background in web marketing?

If any of these thoughts have ever crossed your mind, you’re not alone. Having a great real estate website with lead conversion technology is becoming more important to your success with every passing day. Every time a potential new customer goes online to search for a home or find a new agent, you have the chance to convert a new lead. Having a great lead conversion website can mean actual money in your pocket.

So where do you start? Consider your website’s life cycle. From your site’s creation all the way to the time when customers return to your site because you offer such great information, there are things you should do at every step to ensure you’re making a useful, informative, dynamic site.

Consider these tips for every phase of your website’s growth and development:

## Design a great site

Many factors go into what makes a great site. From clear and concise writing to professional design, and from captivating photography to fresh content, every detail matters.

- **Start by doing your research.** Spend a few hours looking at competitors’ websites. Make a list of what you like and what you don’t like. Are their sites professional? Do they clearly show the value that they provide to clients? Are they aesthetically pleasing? How are they converting leads?
- **Invest in good writing and design.** Nothing conveys trust and expertise like a smartly-designed, easy-to-read, professional site. Grammatical errors, cookie-cutter templates, and low resolution or fuzzy images and logos make a poor impression. If you visited a site that looked unprofessional, would you trust that person to find your dream home? Probably not. If you’re a great writer or web designer, you can do the work yourself. If this isn’t your strong suit, don’t hesitate to bring in an expert. At the very least, find a professional template.
- **Engage your site visitors from the second they arrive on your site.** Let’s be honest: most people visiting your site are looking for listings. Don’t miss an opportunity to grab them on the home page. Make your listings show up front-and-center.
- **Position yourself as an invaluable resource in your local area** and provide the information people are looking for: frequently-asked questions about local neighborhoods, how-to videos, testimonials, webinars, white papers, and links to more information.
- **Integrate a blog into your site.** It’s an easy way to make sure your site always has fresh, up-to-date content. Make sure the topics you post about are informative, entertaining, and fit your audience.

*“Market Leader is like the one stop shop where I can respond to leads immediately from my phone and I never have to miss out on lead correspondence—even when I’m out with other clients. Knowing clients’ search criteria enables me to respond to them with the information they are looking for, making me look even more professional. Market Leader is the greatest thing I’ve done in my real estate career.”*

Deanna S.  
CENTURY 21® Exclamation  
Realty, Bentonville, AR

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- **Make sure that every page has a clear call-to-action.** Be transparent with viewers about what you want them to do on each page, whether it's browsing through new listings, filling out a form, or clicking through to your social media sites.

### Help potential customers find your site

You've invested time and money into creating an amazing website. Don't stop there. It's crucial to make sure the technological pieces are in place so that the right people can find your site.

- **Make sure your website is functional across many browsers**—Internet Explorer, Safari, and Firefox, to name a few. Also, make sure your site works on mobile devices like iPhones and iPads. This will ensure that the most people possible can view and use your site.
- **Search engines thrive on new content.** Keep your blog updated and make sure that each blog post and headline contain important keywords for your market (like 'short sale,' 'Los Angeles real estate,' 'interest rates,' etc.).
- **Your goal is for your website to show up first in search results** when someone looks online for a real estate agent in your area. Consider hiring a marketing agency to work on your Search Engine Optimization (SEO). They'll make sure that your site is optimized for the most popular browsers, and make recommendations for how to increase your site's visibility.
- **Promote your website on social media channels.** Cross-promotion is key. Link to your website on your Facebook page, Twitter feed, YouTube channel, or LinkedIn profile. On the flip side, make sure your website integrates social media technology so that viewers can share your content on their own social media pages.
- **Remember that, while it's nice to have a lot of consumers visit your site, make sure you're targeting the right kind of lead.** For example, if you're a real estate agent who specializes in second and vacation homes, consider advertising your site on other websites, social networks, and media that cater to your specific audience.

### Engage visitors on your site

Now that qualified visitors have found your site among the millions of websites out there, keep them interested. Don't let them be the kind of casual browser who only stays on your site for 10 seconds.

- **Make it as easy as possible for visitors to stay on your site.** The best way to do this is to make sure your website is user-friendly. This means making the layout and navigation of your pages intuitive and logical. Ask friends, family members, or coworkers to test-drive your site. Since they've never seen your new site before, they'll be able to point out any confusing areas or layout issues that you may have overlooked.
- **Pictures, pictures, pictures.** Make sure you have large, colorful pictures of your current listings.
- **Do an A-B test of your features.** If you're not sure if a feature on your site is working as well as it should, consider doing a test. For one week, try it one way. See how many engaged visitors you have on your site. Then, the next week, try something new. Whichever tactic worked better, stick with it.

*"The numbers don't lie: we wouldn't have 256 of our closings we have if it weren't for Market Leader. We've doubled our sales volume! And we recruit agents specifically because other companies just can't compete with what Market Leader provides us: lead generation, websites, and contact management."*

Jim B.  
Realty Executives Mainstream,  
Port Charlotte, FL



## Make sure you get the lead conversion information you need

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While it's great that you're providing interesting and informative content to potential clients, your number one personal goal for your website should be lead conversion.

- **Always keep your lead conversion goal in mind.** That means having an area where site visitors enter their names and contact information front and center. Make sure that your form is simple, easy to understand, and quick to complete. Only ask for the information that you really need. Make the barriers for completion as low as possible.
- **Invest in a contact management system that automatically takes contact information you collect from leads.** A good contact management system streamlines your lead conversion process, saving you time and money. As soon as a potential new client completes the form on your website, they are entered into a lead conversion process that you've created in your contact management system. They'll start receiving pre-set emails from you, new listing alerts, and other touch points that you deem important.
- **In the wording of your website,** focus on the benefits that visitors will get by signing up (access to more complete listing information, emails with new listings sent out, etc.) instead of the features of the site.
- **Register your site with an analytics system like Google Analytics.** It's a great (and free) way to measure how many site visitors you're getting, how they are finding your site, demographic information, and how long they're spending on each page. This kind of information is invaluable.

## Ensure site visitors keep returning

Getting someone to visit your website the first time is the hardest part. But, it's equally important to get them to return to your site in the future.

- **Once visitors are entered into your contact management system, make sure that the follow-up email campaigns they receive are full of links.** Try to make as many components clickable as possible—in-line copy links, your picture, the banner, etc. Do whatever you can to route them back to your site.
- **As we said earlier, keep your site updated with new content.** Every time you add a new feature, listing, or blog post, shout it from the rooftops by posting links on your social media outlets. And, make sure your website address is part of your email signature.
- **Load new listings as quickly as possible.** When you make displaying accurate, up-to-date listings a priority, your site becomes a potential customer's number one resource for real estate information.

A great website helps you find potential new clients, converts them into clients, gives them great information, positions you as the industry expert, and keeps them coming back for more. Invest the time and resources necessary to make your real estate website the envy of your competitors.

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*"I love my Market Leader system! It is the best all-in-one product with superb training and webinars to maximize my business' potential. The continuing commitment to enhancing and improving your services is unparalleled!"*

**Cheryl D.**  
Prudential Florida Realty  
Stuart, FL

market leader®

**Keep these questions in mind as you work on your website:**

What makes me different than my competitors?

Am I effectively communicating a value to my consumers?

Who are the people I want to visit my website? How will I find them?  
How will they find me?

Am I effectively expressing my brand?

Does my site look and feel professional?

What are some creative ways to increase my online presence?

# Contact Management and Your Business: Why Is It So Important?

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Do you use a contact management system in your business? Even if you don't currently utilize one, you've probably heard the phrase floating around in your office, with your colleagues, or in training courses you've taken.

So why is a contact management system so important? Because it's simply one of the best, easiest, most cost-effective tools you can give yourself to help start, grow, and maintain your business. Not yet convinced? Consider these 10 ways a contact management system can change the way you do business.

- 1. Keeps you organized.** When information for all of your contacts, leads, current clients, and past clients is stored in the same place, you'll no longer have to hold on to old emails, business cards, scraps of paper, or voice mails with bits of contact information and notes to yourself. Once you get in the habit of entering contacts into your system right when you receive them, you'll spend less time worrying about what you're forgetting, and more time turning leads into sales.
- 2. Saves you time.** Not only will you save time by not having to remember where you left off with a particular lead or client, but you'll also save time in the lead conversion process. Most contact management systems offer automated assistance: put a contact into your system and they'll receive a series of conversion emails on a schedule that you've pre-set. Go about your day knowing that you're beginning the lead conversion process while you're out getting important work done.
- 3. Maintains relationships with existing customers.** Past clients are an invaluable commodity. Once a lead or client has been entered into your system, they stay there as long as you want them to. Consider this benefit an investment in future communication. Set your system up to send past clients birthday or anniversary cards, or a monthly newsletter. When you keep the lines of communication open with past customers, you're top-of-mind when they're ready to make their next real estate transaction.
- 4. Saves you money with targeted marketing.** Sending blanket marketing to your whole town is a thing of the past. Save money and effort on your marketing campaigns by choosing targeted segments of your database and sending them only the information that is relevant for them. Announce a new listing with a postcard that's only sent to contacts who have searched for homes in that neighborhood or in that price range, for example. Not only will you be saving yourself time and money, but you'll also be sending leads valuable information, instead of wearing out your welcome with bulk campaigns they may not be interested in.
- 5. Determines which marketing efforts are producing the most qualified leads.** Data on the ROI of your marketing efforts is crucial to your success. Your contact management system will provide information on the efficacy of recent campaigns, helping you decide whether a campaign was money well spent. Moving forward, you can set benchmarks and goals for success, and over time, you'll know how to best allocate your marketing budget to reach the right customers, at the right time, with the right message. Consider

*"It's my goal to create a higher standard of selling real estate. My 14-member team generates a steady flow of closings using Market Leader, and it yields an excellent return on my investment."*

**Chris P.**  
Weichert Realtors Premier  
Williamsport, PA

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creating a formula for success. Study past campaigns and their related sales and determine the profit produced per hour of time you dedicated to a marketing campaign.

- 6. Tracks your personal performance.** A good system can provide you with contact, marketing, and response time history for your current, recent, and past sales. Track your own success over time and identify areas for improvement. Reflect on your strategy with individual clients, or with multiple clients over a given time period.
- 7. Keeps tabs on your team members.** In the same way that a contact management system can help you evaluate your own personal performance, it is a great tool for agents or brokers who manage teams. Keep track of how agents on your team are performing, how long it is taking them to follow up with new leads, and what kind of marketing efforts are being used.
- 8. Separates browsers from buyers.** Based on the data your system has about what your leads are searching for on your site, you'll be able to easily separate the browsers from the serious buyers, helping you know where to spend the bulk of your precious time.
- 9. Uses history to see why certain deals or clients fell through.** Don't repeat mistakes. Inevitably, some contacts will stop responding, some deals will fall apart, and some buyers will decide to go in a different direction. Minimize the frequency of these events by using your contact management system to analyze your touch points with these contacts and see how you could improve upon their experience working with you next time.
- 10. Provides data at your fingertips.** A system that is linked to the MLS search functionality on your website will give you a wealth of information on your contacts. From price range to neighborhood, number of bedrooms to the time of day they're focusing on their home search, you'll be leaps and bounds ahead of the competition when you utilize this intelligence.

From keeping tabs on where contacts are in the lead conversion process, to enacting and analyzing marketing campaigns, and from determining which leads are the most qualified to maintaining your relationships with past clients, a great contact management system is like your own digital office assistant. It makes you the best real estate professional you can be: responsive, organized, budget-conscious, goal-driven, and strategic.

*"Market Leader has allowed me to position myself as one of the top technology driven agents in my market. Now I am working to convert all the leads I am getting through my website."*

Axay P.  
Keller Williams Realty  
Tulsa, OK

# Breaking Down The Wall: Getting to Know an Agent During the Recruiting Process

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*"I have grown from myself to five buyers agents under me. If it wasn't for Market Leader, I wouldn't be in business. I love this product."*

Rich K., Razor City Realty, Gillette, WY

There's a lot at stake when you decide it's time to recruit new real estate agents for your brokerage. Not only do you need a top-notch agent who will close as many sales as possible, you also need someone who gets along with management and colleagues or team members. Additionally, not every experienced agent will be a perfect fit for your brokerage—every brokerage has its own office environment, management style, and look and feel. You need to find someone who is not only qualified on paper, but will be a great addition to your company on many different levels.

When you bring someone onboard, you are making a sizable investment in his or her success. Beginning on day one, you'll be providing him or her with office space and resources, training and mentoring, technology, and marketing. And, from that day onward, they'll be associated with your brand and reputation. Therefore, it's crucial to ensure that you're hiring individuals that will stick around long after their training and introductory period has been completed and who reflect the values and reputation of your company.

Before you start bringing in candidates for any open positions, reach out to current team members for a brainstorm. Involve people from all areas of your business: new and experienced agents, support staff, human resources, team leaders, and management. Spend a few hours discussing the type of real estate professional that all of you are interested in hiring. Cover everything from experience level and areas of specialty to personality type and career goals. Make a list of the top ten attributes that you are looking for (things like friendly, trustworthy, assertive, strong negotiator, and tech-savvy are good places to start). Once your team has painted a picture of the type of agent you're looking for, write some interview questions that can help you find the right person.

Here are some great questions to ask candidates as part of your interview process. We've broken them down into separate areas. The idea is that these questions cover many different angles, all of which are important to choosing someone who is a good fit for your brokerage.

## Experience

- **How long have you been working in real estate?** This is a great lead off question. But, keep in mind that the agent with 20 years' experience may not always be a better choice than the agent with 2 years' experience. Someone newer to the industry may be more open to innovative techniques and more driven to succeed.
- **Are you a full time agent?** This may seem simple, but many real estate agents only work part-time. Use this question to ensure that a candidate's singular career focus is real estate.

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- **How many homes have you sold in this area in the last year?** Make sure that a candidate not only has experience as a real estate agent, but also knows your local market. Compare his or her recent track record with those of some of the higher-performing agents at your brokerage to see how this potential agent compares.

### Personal attributes

- **What are some common problems that come up when selling a home?** How do you anticipate and handle bumps in the road? Ask your interviewee to answer this question with specific examples. You'll get a good idea for how he or she handles stressful situations, what type of customer service and communication skills he or she has, and how analytical and determined the candidate is.
- **What has been your average time to close in the last year?** Get a feel for the tenacity and determination of a particular agent, even in a down economy.
- **What are you looking for in a brokerage?** This is a great way to get a feel for the kind of leadership and working environment an agent is looking for. Explain your own management style and discuss the day-to-day office environment at your brokerage. Make sure your expectations align.
- **What would past clients say your greatest attributes are?** Listen closely to the way a candidate describes past client interactions. Customer service is key.

### Special skills

- **Tell me about your short sale and foreclosure experience.** If your brokerage deals with short sales and foreclosures (as most brokerages do these days), make sure that the candidate understands the process from start to finish, and has firsthand experience with the larger short sale and foreclosure lenders.
- **Are you a member of the National Association of Realtors?** Certified Realtors are held to higher ethical and professional standards and tend to be more involved in the communities they work in.
- **What continuing education classes have you taken recently?** Do you have any special certifications? Find out if a candidate has any special training that could be an advantage to your brokerage.

### Future outlook and long-term goals

- **How comfortable are you with using technology in your everyday real estate business?** As the industry continues to rely more heavily on online listings, contact management systems, social media, and other technology, you want to ensure that you're hiring agents who are willing to embrace changes in the marketplace and eager to learn new technology that can help them grow their business.
- **What are you hoping to achieve by joining our brokerage?** This question helps you gain an understanding of the long-term career goals that an agent has, and to see how your brokerage fits into their plans. Look for someone that is hoping to gain more experience, learn from more experienced colleagues, or create aggressive sales goals.

*"We have become the fastest growing real estate franchise in Sarasota County Florida. 81 great agents in 17 months. Last month we closed 43 sides and 18 of them were a direct result of Market Leader."*

**Steve F.**  
EXIT King Realty  
Sarasota, FL

# Recruiting and Retaining Great Agents: A Guide for Management

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*“Market Leader has had a positive effect on my business. It has increased my time management, client response times, flow of information transparency and many other “management” skills that busy agents let go unattended.”*

Howard F., Bob Parks Realty, Brentwood, TN

Picture this: You're a real estate agent, and you're searching for a new brokerage to join. You've outgrown your previous brokerage arrangement, and are looking for a change of pace. But what exactly are you looking for? What kind of place is attractive to you? And, once you've established yourself as a team member of a new brokerage, what kind of benefits and attributes will make you likely to stay for the long haul?

If you're a brokerage owner, manager, human resources representative, or team leader, you know how important it is to attract new real estate agents to your brokerage, and to keep them happy and satisfied once they start working with you.

While having happy team members is important in any industry, in real estate, a strong team foundation with adept leadership can make or break your brokerage. On every level, your agents are the face of your brokerage, interfacing with important clients and leads on a daily basis.

Whether your brokerage is growing and looking for new agents to join the team, or if you just want to make sure that your existing team members are happy, engaged, and invested in the business, consider these tips:

- **Acknowledge that agents are crucial to your business, and treat them that way.** It's not the brokerage that makes the agent; it's the agents that make the brokerage. Acknowledge that skilled, successful real estate agents are the key to the growth and success of your brokerage, and make sure your agents (and potential future agents) know that you value their expertise.
- **Embrace and encourage their independence.** Real estate agents pride themselves on running an independent business venture. Yes, they work for your brokerage, but they thrive on working on their own, whether it's reaching out to new leads, building relationships with clients, or closing deals. They don't need a lot of hand holding and micro-managing. Instead of being a traditional boss, treat them as a partner. Communicate with your agents regularly, and encourage them whenever possible.
- **Outline all of the benefits and details that agents affiliated with your brokerage receive.** Create a list of every benefit and expense that agents at your office will be dealing with. This comprehensive list makes a great tool not only for your recruiting process, but also as a way to remind your current agents of the value you provide. Additionally, it shows your agents that you value open communication, transparency in business,

market leader<sup>®</sup>

# 2012 Real Estate Business Plan

- and that you want to clearly outline expectations. Include things like fees, dues, requirements, receptionist duties, parking, marketing opportunities, training, travel, and office environment.
- **Offer tools and support to help them be successful.** Help your agents do what they do best—sell. You'll be much more appealing to potential new agents (and existing agents) if you offer great support staff, nicely equipped offices, and technology support. When these things are taken care of, you free up your agents' time to connect with clients, close deals, and find new leads.
  - **Constantly evaluate your processes and cut out unnecessary bureaucracy.** On a regular basis, take a critical look at your office's processes and procedures. Whenever possible, eliminate redundancies and ask yourself if certain steps are really necessary. Lower the barriers to success for your agents.
  - **Offer training, mentorship, and continuing education opportunities.** As a collection of agents all working together, your brokerage is in the unique position of being able to offer valuable training and continuing education opportunities that might be inaccessible to agents working independently. Regularly schedule training and education seminars in the office, and pair up newer agents with a seasoned veteran as part of a mentorship program.
  - **Don't just advertise your brokerage—promote your agents.** Many brokerages spend the bulk of their money advertising themselves. When you're planning out your marketing efforts for the year, consider promoting your agents too. They are key to your business, and they'll feel like you're supporting them by including them in your marketing.
  - **Offer technology solutions that agents need.** Today's real estate agents recognize the important role technology plays in their business. Help your agents succeed by investing in technology solutions like lead generating websites, content management systems, and...
  - **Pay them quickly!** It seems like a no-brainer, but process your agents' commission payments as quickly as possible. Working within a commission-based pay structure means that paychecks come inconsistently. Show your agents that you value their hard work by paying them in a timely manner.
  - **Ask your agents what they want.** You're not a mind reader, so the very best way to discover what your agents are looking for is to ask them. Every six months, take the time to ask your agents what tools and resources are helping them find success, what needs fixing, and what tools or processes should be retired. You'll gain valuable information, and your team members will appreciate that you value their input.

*"We have been on Market Leader for 3 years and have always got a return of 3–4 times what we have paid for the program."*

**Arvid P.**  
Award Realty  
Sun City, AZ



### Checklist: Ask your agents these questions:

#### Office environment

- Do you have the type of workspace needed to be successful in your business?
- How can our support staff help you more?
- How many hours per week do you spend in the office?
- Do you also work from home?
- Is there anything (supplies, administrative support, etc.) that we can provide, that we aren't already offering?

#### Compensation and benefits

- How does our compensation model compare to other places you've worked?
- Do you feel you are receiving fair compensation for your work?
- Do you feel you are paid in a timely manner?

#### Training and professional development

- What kind of training opportunities would you like us to offer?
- Are you interested in participating in a mentorship program, (either as a mentor or as a newer agent)?
- What time of day or day of the week are you most available for professional development programs?

#### Marketing and technology

- How would you rate our investment in technology?
- What kinds of print and digital marketing solutions are you interested in?
- How can we help you promote your business as part of our brokerage?

#### Happiness and job satisfaction

- Rate your experience so far with our brokerage.
- What do we do best?
- What can we do to improve your experience as a broker with our firm?

Keeping your best agents on board and recruiting talented new agents are cornerstones of helping your brokerage to survive and thrive. Just as in any management position, regardless of industry, be respectful, honest, open, and know when to get out of the way and let the talented people you've hired do what they do best.

*"Market Leader allows me to free my time so that I can focus on appointments. The website and lead gen tools have helped increase both our buyer and our listing business."*

**Joshua N.**  
Keller Williams Commerce  
Keego Harbor, MI

## Worksheets To Help

Together with the tips and strategies offered in the previous pages, these worksheets will help you take a practical look at the way you operate your business. From calculating your monthly expenses to setting yearly income goals, we hope these worksheets will give you a road map for continuing your 2012 business success.

## Calculate Your Expenses

### Living Expenses Worksheet

\$ _____	Mortgage payment
\$ _____	Household (heat, water, etc.)
\$ _____	Food (grocery and dining out)
\$ _____	Car expenses (payment, gas, oil, maintenance)
\$ _____	Entertainment
\$ _____	Child care
\$ _____	Education
\$ _____	Investments/savings
\$ _____	Other living expenses
\$ _____	<b>SUBTOTAL</b> (income needed after taxes)
\$ _____	Divide by .70
\$ _____	<b>Monthly gross income needed</b>
\$ _____	Multiply by 12 months
\$ _____	<b>Total gross income required</b>

### Tip: make this calculation easier

Market Leader products simplify your expenses and provides a specific return on investment: you can see exactly how many people are coming to your website and how many become prospects and clients. Market Leader also makes it easy for you to quickly market your listings across many different websites at once—at no additional cost.

### Annual Business Expenses

\$ _____	Desk fee
\$ _____	MLS dues
\$ _____	MLS lockboxes
\$ _____	Telephone
\$ _____	Cell phone
\$ _____	Internet
\$ _____	Computer software
\$ _____	Supplies, maintenance
\$ _____	Car payment
\$ _____	Gas and oil
\$ _____	Car maintenance and insurance
\$ _____	Office supplies
\$ _____	Meals and entertainment
\$ _____	Seminars and conventions
\$ _____	Leads generation subscriptions
\$ _____	Postcards and postage
\$ _____	Flyers and brochures
\$ _____	Signs
\$ _____	Website
\$ _____	Newspaper and magazine ads
\$ _____	Legal/professional/CPA
\$ _____	Assistant's salary and benefits
\$ _____	Payroll taxes
\$ _____	Transaction coordinator
\$ _____	Listing coordinator
\$ _____	Dues and subscriptions
\$ _____	License
\$ _____	E & O insurance
\$ _____	Industrial insurance
\$ _____	Medical insurance
\$ _____	Disability insurance
\$ _____	Charity
\$ _____	<b>TOTAL</b>

## Calculate Number Of Transactions Needed

*Income and web conversion calculator*

**Step 1: Determine your average commission per transaction**

average house price range \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 X \_\_\_\_\_ % commission \_\_\_\_\_  
 = total gross commission \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 ÷ 2 (for sale side or listing side) \_\_\_\_\_  
 X your commission split \_\_\_\_\_  
 = **commission per transaction** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 2: Income goal**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

÷ by commission per transaction

= **transactions needed per year** \_\_\_\_\_

### Sample Calculation

Part 1

Determine your average commission per transaction

\$250,000 average price range  
 x 6% commission  
 = \$15,000  
 ÷ 2  
 = \$7,500  
 x 60% split  
 = **\$4,500 commission per transaction**

Part 2

Specify desired income, then divide by average commission

\$150,000 income goal  
 ÷ \$4,500 commission  
 = **34 transactions to reach goal**

## Calculate Number Of New Prospects Needed

*Income and web conversion calculator*

### Calculate prospects needed per year

take the total transactions you want \_\_\_\_\_

X 25 (prospect-to-sale ratio is 25 to 1)\* \_\_\_\_\_

**= total number of prospects needed** \_\_\_\_\_

### Break it down into a daily number

annual prospects needed \_\_\_\_\_

÷ by 12 months \_\_\_\_\_

÷ by 30 days \_\_\_\_\_

**= prospects needed each day** \_\_\_\_\_

### Example

34 transactions  
 x 25 prospects  
 = 850 prospects per year  
 ÷ 12 months  
 = 70 prospects per month  
 ÷ 30 days  
 = 2 **new prospects per day**

### Tip: generate active buyers

Market Leader makes it easy for you to attract motivated buyers and sellers who contact you directly. You can eliminate cold calling and ineffective strategies, and even capture new business from out-of-market customers. Gain confidence when you have a team of experts supporting your success with Market Leader.

\*Ratio of 25 prospects to sales taken from *The Real Estate Rainmaker* by Dan Gooder Rickard

## Online Marketing Planning Calendar

While online marketing doesn't replace traditional marketing, it can be a very powerful tool to get in front of prospective buyers while they're online looking for their next ideal home. Make a plan just as you would for traditional marketing.

### Task List

- Follow up on all leads within 1–2 hours
- Email home listings to prospective buyers daily
- Monitor website activity to determine prospect readiness (use Growth Leader tools)
- Email newsletter
- Choose 20 different prospects every week to make personal “touching base” phone calls
- Create and maintain an ongoing social media campaign: blog, Twitter, Facebook, etc.
- Contacting FSBOs, foreclosures and expired—how many will you contact per month

**Online marketing works best when combined with personal follow-up and traditional marketing. Drive prospective buyers to your own website to search for homes and receive listing alerts. Then, plan your supporting activities:**

- How many follow-up calls per prospect each month?
- When will you schedule your calls? (i.e. Tuesdays from 3:30–5:30pm)
- How many drop-bys?
- When will you drop by? (i.e. Saturdays from 9:30–11:30am)
- How many postcards will you mail each month?
- How many open houses will you host each month? (Be sure to capture email addresses on your sign-up sheet)

### Sample Planning Calendar

October	November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send email newsletter to entire sphere</li> <li>■ Call past clients to ask for email addresses</li> <li>■ Launch blog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send email newsletter to entire sphere</li> <li>■ Letter to geographic area asking for email addresses</li> <li>■ Continue posting to blog twice a week</li> <li>■ Launch Twitter account, post daily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Send email newsletter to entire sphere</li> <li>■ Call sphere and ask for email addresses</li> <li>■ Continue posting to blog twice a week</li> <li>■ Post tweets to Twitter account daily</li> </ul>

## Summary Sheet

### Goals: Quick Reference

For your convenience use this Summary Sheet to fill in all the important goals and metrics of your business plan. This sheet may serve as a quick reference throughout the year as you track your success and achieve your goals.

Income goal for 2012	\$ _____
Dollars per transaction to you	\$ _____
Number of transactions needed for goals	_____
Number of listings	_____
Number of listings sold	_____
Number of sales	_____
Number of prospects in your database	_____
Number of prospects you need	_____

### Break it down

Listings needed per week	_____
Sales per week	_____
Prospects needed per week	_____

## Progress Chart

Use the following chart to check your progress against your goals. In the blanks in the lefthand column, write your goal numbers (for example, if you intend to work 3 open houses per month, write “3” in the blank).

At the end of every month, mark percent of goal completed. Be sure to reward yourself if you hit 100% of every goal for a month.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Generate ___ leads per month												
Follow up on all leads within 10 hours												
Email home listings to prospective buyers daily												
Monitor website activity to determine prospect readiness (useMarket Leader tools)												
Email newsletter (one per month)												
Choose 20 different prospects every week to make personal “touching base” phone calls												
Create and maintain ongoing social media campaign: blog, Twitter, Facebook, etc.												
Postcards and emails—send ___ on the 15th of each month												
Open houses— ___ per month												
Follow-up calls— ___ per month												
Contacting FSBOs, foreclosures and expired—contact ___ per month												

**My reward for achieving 100% of all goals this month is:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Be Found, Be Engaged, And Be In Control With Market Leader

More than 100,000 real estate agents, teams, and brokerages use our complete lead-to-close solutions to grow and manage their business.

### The competitive edge

To succeed in the ever-changing real estate industry, you need the tools to effectively generate and close more transactions than your competitors—while appealing to today's online consumers.

Market Leader serves top real estate professionals with all of the leads, technology, and training they'll ever need to enjoy long-term success. Let Market Leader help you surpass your goals too!

### One solution lets you do it all

Whether you're an agent or you run an office, Market Leader offers all the tools to power your business—in one convenient solution. You'll never need to look elsewhere for your real estate products!

#### ■ Lead generation

Drive hundreds of motivated leads each month using Craigslist, search widgets, pay-per-click advertising, and other features to help you capture more business.

#### ■ Contact management

Easily separate buyers from the browsers, track business performance, and cultivate relationships that result in closed sales.

#### ■ Marketing Center

Power your brand with thousands of professionally designed templates for print and email—including flyers, postcards, automated campaigns, and more.

#### ■ Websites

Set yourself apart with a polished real estate website that captures new leads while helping you manage and grow your business.

#### ■ Education

Reach your goals with free training, education, and online resources that come with your Market Leader system.

Start growing your business today. Visit [www.marketleader.com](http://www.marketleader.com).

  
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