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## **The value of social media and video-bios**

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The Internet is playing a larger and increasingly more significant role when people decide to buy real estate. According to a study by the National Association of Realtors, an overwhelming majority, 89%, of recent home buyers in the U.S. said they used the Internet as an information resource during their home-buying process ('NAR Home Buyer and Seller Survey Shows Value of Long-Term Home Ownership,' November 5, 2010). In many instances, company web sites are initially reviewed, but those real estate professionals that embrace social media tools, like blogging, social networks, and social bookmarking, interact with considerably more prospective and current clients.

To successfully build an online presence, agents should focus on producing quality content to engage participants, serve as a valuable resource, and build a strong referral network. Chris Brogan, whose blog is in the Top 5 of the Advertising Age Power150, says to, "Look at your blog as if it were a storefront, or an office space, or a gathering spot for conversations, or a magazine, or a part of a mall" ('Value Your Blog Real Estate,' August 3, 2010). Content can be posted simultaneously on business web sites, blogs, and social network profile pages, like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Using multiple online marketing mediums will increase the likelihood of the message being seen and expand the number of personal connections being made.

Another online solution to help promote the expertise and personality of real estate agents and brokers is the production and use of video-bios. Video-bios serve as a great way to bridge the offline-online marketing gap, and enable prospects to place a face with a name - while also getting a sense of an agent's personal style. This online tool has the proven power to garner trust and leave a lasting impression that converts prospects into clients.

Social media and video-bios are only part of a successful integrated marketing strategy for real estate professionals. However, when combined with other online marketing efforts, like search engine optimization and ad placement, social media marketing and video-bios can transform an agent's web presence - greatly increasing lead generation and sales. An integrated marketing firm can assist agents and brokers in designing and executing an effective marketing strategy that ensures online efforts are working in tandem with offline tactics (like press releases and direct mail) to deliver the laser-sharp messaging that will generate leads and increase sales.

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