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Campaigning for clients with Email

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While businesses are rapidly increasing their use of social media, blogging, and mobile applications to increase leads and retain clients, email continues to serve as a central marketing and communication strategy. In an October 2011 survey, Constant Contact found that 97% of U.S. small businesses use email to connect with customers and prospects. By developing targeted email campaigns as part of an overall integrated marketing plan, real estate agents and brokers can significantly generate qualified leads and expand client bases.

Email campaigns are a fairly low-cost marketing solution that are easily executed with user-friendly software platforms such as Campaigner (an e-newsletter campaign program) or MailChimp. These types of programs provide professional templates for achieving corporate brand alignment, as well as a variety of methods for tracking campaigns - including open rates, click-throughs, non-delivery rates, sales conversions, and list opt-outs. Tracking campaign performance is a critical aspect of email marketing. When done correctly, it leads to accurate lists that deliver improved results with each subsequent campaign.

Content for email campaigns should be tailored to specific audiences rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. It is best to develop separate campaigns for prospects interested in first-time home buying and downsizing, another for previous clients, and an additional one for existing clients. While some campaign content can be about the sender's business (like open houses, new listings, awards received, etc.), there should also be quality, useful information focused solely on recipients and their needs. This will lead them to value your messages and be more inclined to continue subscribing to your email list.

When developing campaigns, be sure to include the name most likely recognized by recipients in the "from" field (either yours or a senior manager's), and create subject lines that attract attention and persuade them to open the emails. Also, experiment with sending emails at different times of the day. Mid-morning and mid-afternoon deliveries often achieve higher open rates, but this can shift based on the real estate market and target audience.

As with every marketing tactic, email campaigns should complement and enhance existing on and offline efforts. Therefore, always include links in your email campaigns to your web sites, blogs, and social media pages to drive online traffic and engage leads.

Once comfortable with email campaigning, try creative solutions like video messages (provided by services like EyeJot) and virtual business cards that produce eye-catching, high click-through results (check out BOJO). Integrated marketing firms are great resources for providing additional ideas and strategies for implementing successful email campaigns.

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