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## **Future of real estate marketing: Are you in control? - by Daniel Calano**

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Daniel Calano  
Prospectus, LLC

They say there is an app for everything. You probably use many of them in your real estate work. You probably know a fair amount about social media, influencers, search engines and other ways to bring real estate to the consumer. But are you on top? Are you in control?

Although real estate sourcing, sales, leasing has come a long way, technologically speaking, adaption has been slower than in many other industries. That is about to change, whether you want it or not. Not only will you be using more resources in finding properties, marketing and selling, “tools” will be searching for you, and matching you up with people and properties, without you even knowing it. In short, your activities will be monitored and manipulated, strong words that can be for the better or for the worse. Here are some thoughts that will help you maintain some control.

While there are many internet companies that we could use as examples, Amazon and Google are the obvious elephants in the room. So obvious, that congress has been looking into these companies as to how much undue influence they are actually have. As you well know, Amazon is able to learn a great deal about your consumption habits. They know what you’ve bought, what you’ve liked, where you’ve shopped, how much money you have to spend. They are able to steer you with simple popups, buying suggestions, or through ads paid for by other marketplaces. They know this about you in part because you let them know, and in part because they have algorithms that can figure you out.

Google is further reaching. It is the mother of directed marketing. You are constantly feeding Google information in your searches, your travel routes, in your business postings: consider Google Search, Google Maps, Google My Business and so on. Google clearly influences you, but the more you are aware of this, the more you can guide Google tools to your advantage. According to a recent real estate blog, “Google is about to revolutionize the way consumers find real estate agents”. The article shows how Google has evolved from providing information to manipulating searches. “Positioned” results of a search is complicated and sophisticated. Savvy companies figure out how to get their

brand most visible in a Google search. They call this “search engine optimization”. It used to be that your position on the Google search page was near the top simply because of the number and frequency of people who googled your company or your name. That is still partially the case, but the science has grown.

How do you “control” Google to your advantage. Search engines like Google reward websites that have strong search optimization practices placing them higher in the search results. Real estate users/websites can improve their visibility by modifying their webpage, creating more fresh contents, using key word phrases to drive traffic, adding relevant blog and social media content and link other sites that are relevant. Getting further into the weeds, companies can pay Google each time a user clicks on their ad or webpage. These are called “paid searches”, and often represent the single largest line in a marketing budget. In general, search engines like Google reward “best in class” webpages by literally putting them at the top. Google likes it when you are successful.

Very sophisticated companies practice other targeting techniques, such as “dayparting”, the practice of specifying when you want your ads to appear in the day. For example, some will allocate a greater portion of their budget for times when they can get increased visibility. Similarly, “geo-targeting” allow companies to allocate their spending based on targeted geographic areas. Also, “device targeting” selects certain ads to be served across selected desktop and mobile devices. They know that, for example, millennials are much more comfortable with mobile searches, specifically while they are moving around, for example, to find an apartment. Finally, paid social media is utilized in places like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube.

This trend can be your friend. Real estate marketing is changing. Yes, you will still use old school methods, like telephoning your contacts and having lunch with potential customers and maybe a good old open house. But, don’t be caught short. Get on board with the quickly changing digital marketing and enjoy the ride. If you don’t, you will surely miss out.

Daniel Calano, CRE, is the managing partner and principal of Prospectus, LLC, Cambridge, Mass.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540