

HACKING THE GENERATION

REAL ESTATE MARKETING TO MILLENNIALS

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1. Stand Out on Social Media

Millennials expect customized content and digital interactions, so it is critical to deliver realistic home options to them where they are. They are on Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and texts. The smart real estate agent who wants to cultivate millennials will skip the emails and phone calls and grab their attention on social media. Make sure your posts have great photos of the home. Place text over the photos that include beds, baths, square feet, asking price, and neighborhood. Don't make a millennial dig into the copy to find the statistics. Instead, put them right onto the photo.

2. Turn Open Houses Into Events

The best way that you can attract clients is by making events instead of open houses. Open houses are dry, stiff, and boring. They make people feel uncomfortable and stingy. Instead of the typical open house, throw an event at every house we sell. You can do everything from photos with Santa to live DJs to outdoor luaus, or a game of thrones theme. Try and mix things up to keep things fun and fresh. The idea is to make it a fun atmosphere that is enjoyable and welcoming. You want people to come knowing it's going to be a laid-back experience where they can mingle and interact. The events will push people toward your social media platforms, which is where you can make raging, loyal fans out of them.

3. Have a Modern Website

I think a good approach for agents is to distance themselves from the stodgy image people have of a real estate agent. A simple and effective way to do that is to have a modern website. Real estate brokers typically have very old school logos, fonts, and overall image. That's not what millennials want. Even if you do have great technology that streamlines the buying process, if someone bounces from your website, no one is going to see it.

4. Use Facebook Ads

Millennials are on social media all the time. Real estate agents can leverage this fact by spending their marketing budget on Facebook Advertising. Facebook ads are so targeted that you can even choose to only show your ads to people that are between ages 18 and 36 and are likely to buy a home within your city. Putting together a unique photo for the ad that evokes emotion and sharing facts about your experience in the

ad copy will work wonders for gaining trust. You can share things like “I’ve helped 35 families happily find their dream homes last year, and I’m excited to be able to do the same for you.” That’s it. Make sure you place your logo on one bottom corner of the photo, and you’re done.

5. Manage Your Social Media Content

If there’s one way to reach your millennial market, it’s through social media. But with so many businesses filling the digital space with your own marketing, you need to have a streamlined strategy to cut through the noise and get noticed

6. Focus on Online Content

Millennials now represent the largest population segment for homebuyers. To capture their attention, real estate agents have to embrace technology and social media and online platforms of preference for these young and savvy buyers. However, you can’t stop at making videos, posting it and believing you’ve cast a wide net and now millennials will line up to hire you. It’s imperative that you are providing value in your content, building trust with your online/social media audience and establishing a relationship. A well branded and professional Instagram feed combined with consistent stories featuring a more intimate look inside your day-to-day life can help not only to reach but, most importantly, connect with, this highly desirable target market of homebuyers.

7. Engage on Social Media

Social media is visual, so you can showcase listings easily. It’s accessible, so the younger market can browse through what you have to offer easily. It’s transparent, meaning your audience can read through comments, questions, testimonials, and other social proof available easily. From here, it’s easy to take them to other online platforms that can build your case—try adding links to popular websites that they might frequent. Assume that they will take the time to view the property on Google maps and check out aerial views. It’s better if you can provide a 3D virtual tour. Finally, be sure you engage online. Younger buyers want responses at the speed of need. Don’t assume that just because they left a comment on a social media platform that they’re not serious about their inquiry. Address their questions and then take it offline from there if you can.

8. Market on Other Social Media Platforms

Don't just look at Facebook for social media marketing, explore creative new channels for unclaimed territories. Quora, the online question-and-answer website, has a large population of tech-savvy millennials asking real estate-related questions. The topic "Real Estate" has 516,000 followers and hourly updates. Marketing on Quora can be as easy as answering a few highly visible questions. Reddit, despite a geeky reputation, is a free platform to reach millennials that's lesser known. The site has 542 million monthly visitors, most of whom are young and educated, which usually translate to higher income levels. The topic "RealEstate: HomeOwners & Investors" has 137,000 followers. Some real estate agents have already found great successes on Reddit—an "Ask Me Anything" post by a real estate agent generated hundreds of replies.

9. Post Your Listings on Instagram

Instagram is the next frontier in terms of millennials finding their real estate agents and mortgage loan officers. Since this generation has a knack for wanting to go local and feel understood, they are seeking individuals who are experts in their potential new hometown and won't waste their time. For example, if you're looking for a real estate agent in Asheville, North Carolina, you'll most likely want to find someone who is involved in the community and can understand exactly what you are seeking. You should be able to search #ashevilleagent or #ashevillerealestate on Instagram and find a user that has a feed that inspires you.

10. Create an Impressive IDX Website

Expect your millennial clients to do their own search for property listings online, so it's important even for small realty agencies to be available in the digital world. Having an impressive business website doesn't have to be expensive.

11. Post Great Images of Your Listings

As a visually focused generation, millennials expect to see amazing, professional photos and videos—including 3D—online. Make sure you're posting only the best listing photos if you expect to make a lasting impression and gain a following. Young homebuyers will research property information and information about you, so make sure your website is

modern and up to date, and all photos and videos—including your personal photo—are professional and recent.

12. Add a Landing Page for Your Ads

When marketing real estate to millennials it's imperative that you stand out from the crowd and capture their attention. Identify your target audience and speak to them in ways that will resonate and connect with them. For search engine marketing (SEM) or Facebook ad campaigns, create beautiful landing pages using software such as Instapage and personalize the messaging as much as possible. Keep the content brief and to the point on the landing pages. Succinct messaging is key for getting younger people to click on your calls-to-actions (CTAs) and earn their business. The keywords, ad copy, landing page, and subsequent page you drive them to must be aligned through proper message match to ensure a seamless customer journey.

13. Use the Right Tone

One of the key differences between reaching millennials and reaching older demographics on social media is tone. Millennials are increasingly interacting with brands on social media and, in particular, they're interacting with brands who talk to them like people. Stuffy, information-packed posts get looked over by this new group of homebuyers. Keep your tone light, friendly, and conversational, and you'll see increased engagement from millennials.

14. Create Educational Content for Millennials

Many millennials are going on Google and searching "how to buy a house" or "how to apply for a mortgage." Creating educational content that answers these questions is a great way to drive traffic to your website. However, many other marketers are doing something similar. To make it unique, a real estate broker or real estate agent can offer educational seminars to high school and college students through educational institutions. By partnering with a school or university, it gives a broker or real estate agents huge credibility and legitimacy when educating millennials. Then, when millennials are ready to make a purchase, they will already have a relationship with the broker/real estate agents that taught them about real estate in school.

15. Have All Your Information Readily Available

When marketing to millennials in the digital space, it's important to get pertinent information across as quickly and succinctly as possible. Digital users don't want extra work. We don't want to have to bother with clicking out of a post, profile, or website to find out further information. Include all crucial details like home price, home features and amenities, address, and contact information in an image size-optimized for the social media platform that you will post it on. On Twitter and Facebook, include a hyperlink in the body of your social caption to the specific post. Instagram does not enable hyperlinks in posts, so be sure to include a URL with updated listings in a hyperlink in your Instagram page bio.

16. Invest in Getting Reviews for Your Business

More than any generation before them, millennials place incredible value on the wisdom of the crowd. For real estate professionals, this is underscored by a direct correlation between the volume of positive online reviews and actual sales. Sellers should highlight authentic, positive reviews and testimonials on their site. When given permission, they should include a person's image and name to increase the impact of feedback. If an agency lacks feedback, it can build a repository by sending post-sale surveys to new homeowners, which can fill the gap.

17. Offer to Do the Legwork for Them

Millennials are often time-strapped, so the more that you can do the mundane in-person tasks, like meet with the inspector, meet contractors and other service providers and preview homes in advance for them, my millennial clients appreciate it. That way, they can focus on all the other things that they have to do, while I handle all the necessary items that need to get done to sell or buy a home.

18. Tell Your Stories on Instagram

Features like Instagram stories are a great way for you to get personal with your audience and share things you wouldn't normally post directly on your feed. For example, if you've got a new listing you want to promote, you can use Instagram stories to walk your audience through the home. Millennials aren't just looking for someone who can sell them a

home—they’re looking for someone who they can relate to and trust. So, don’t be afraid to be more raw and personal on your Instagram stories. Also, make use of hashtags throughout your posts. You’ll be surprised how well hashtags work to get traffic to your social profiles. Be strategic with your hashtags and think about who you want to target and what area you want to target when configuring hashtag ideas.

19. Be Creative With Your Taglines

I can’t stress how utterly unremarkable it is to read the same-old generic ad copy that’s written with the same-old boring words. In the Hamptons, the words, “beautiful” and “close to the beach” can be found describing almost every real estate listing. Switch out the standard fluff for more unique words like, “beauteous” and “3 miles from (insert beach name here)!”. Would you rather see a house that’s “Across the Street From the Bay,” or one where you’ll “Wake Up to Water Views”? Don’t be just another scroll through. Get to the point, be creative, and add some authentic flavor to your words.

20. Make Millennials Feel They Are in Control

We realize the millennial has as much information as we do ourselves, or at least almost as much. The millennial buyer is often more aware of what they’re looking to accomplish, and my team and I are making sure to embrace the intelligence of the millennial process. They have often done the research, looked at homes, understand mortgage options, or are motivated to follow advice for a quick sale. This only elevates the mutual respect between both the real estate professional and the millennial buyer. Adapting to their style, and preferred channel of communication, allows them to feel more in the driver seat during the transaction.

21. Know What Millennial Homebuyers Want

The millennial buyers’ market is different from previous generation buyers’ markets because they are more financially savvy and want different things. This is a buyer that grew up during the financial crisis and are going to be more hesitant to lay out major dollars for an investment. They want smaller spaces with less maintenance. Marketing a property that highlights a metropolitan type atmosphere in proximity to the home as well as good public transportation options is always a plus. Also, newer homes do better for this community or older homes that have been recently

upgraded. Homes that need renovations are also being bought but more so by the crowd that is interested in investing rather than those who want to live in the property.

22. Match Content Quality to Your Audience

When marketing to millennials, I think the quality of the content is so important. The information must be clear, concise, and sexy to catch the attention of a generation used to consuming ads and content across multiple platforms faster than anyone previously was able. It is also a generation of convenience, as modern advances have made it that way. Being able to click a link and see the info, rather than call or email someone for more information, is the difference between closing deals and not.

23. Show Your Expertise

One thing that has not changed between millennials and their parents, is that millennials value expertise. Perhaps even more so than their parents. They want to look at houses online, but when they are ready to pull the trigger and buy a home, they seek the counsel of a real estate agent they trust. Most of them are not calling the listing agent to see a house—they want their own representation. Millennials also place a high value on authenticity, trust, and social and environmental stewardship. Having a company that works within those values will help you connect with this audience.

24. Go Beyond Still Photography

Still photos of the property on listing service sites won't cut it anymore. The supermajority of buyers are beginning their home search online and must be drawn in and presented the unique features of a home in "new-age" ways. For instance, the benchmark that is becoming prevalent is getting professional photos taken of the property, such as good-quality, high-resolution cameras, creating high-quality videos for your property that allow buyers to see different perspectives inside and outside the home, including views and close-by amenities via drone footage. Additionally, 3D tour/floor plans of the home will allow buyers to navigate through the home "at-will" and in any direction they choose—they essentially get to do virtual showing before even going to the property. Elite agents will permeate

these features digitally via email, Facebook, Instagram, and so on., to target the most likely buyer demographic for the seller's property.

25. Focus on Improving Target Market Engagement

If you're to market to millennials successfully, then you should be looking to engage with them better than the industry has to generations past. They don't want the shallow, transactional interactions with traditional real estate agents. They want to engage with businesses that share their values and aspirations, so this needs to be factored when you're building your brand and ensuring that every customer touchpoint is consistent with this brand. Above all, provide immense value before even considering selling to them; they yearn for a unique experience worth remarking. One practical tip is to develop a content strategy around trying to support the many segments of millennials at each step of their research journey.

26. Offer Help to Get Low-interest Loans

Other than people with sound financial income and backup, most people purchase apartments or houses by taking loans from any source. Any loan is usually repaid by monthly installments, and the borrower pays the monthly installments from his or her monthly income. However, millennials have very thin income and cannot afford high-interest house loans. Real estate marketers need to campaign about the assistance to get very low-interest house loans for millennials instantly, and real estate businesses must make the arrangements for this. When millennials get the assurance of low-interest house loans, which they can manage to pay in easy monthly EMIs [equated monthly installments] from their thin income, real estate businesses will get more millennial customers.