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With social media becoming the fastest growing area of marketing today, real estate professionals can attract more clients by expanding their reach across popular social media platforms. In his book, Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World, Gary Vaynerchuk compares effective marketing through social media to a boxing match. Vaynerchuk refers to jabs as “lightweight content that benefits customers by making them laugh, snicker, ponder, play a game, feel appreciated or escape; right hooks are calls to action that benefit your businesses.” Vaynerchuk demonstrates how to create shareable, relevant, value-driven content that ensures future clients will pay attention to your story, share your content, and create engage in word-of-mouth marketing on your behalf. Specifically, social media platforms (including the Big Five: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and Tumblr) can help real estate professionals increase their social media presence to increase sales.

THINK POINT #1: The Six Rules to Social Media Success

Vaynerchuk contends that outstanding content throughout social media platforms should follow six rules.

1. **Content should be native.** Though many social media platforms overlap, each has a specific function, style, context, and community – your content should reflect this. Your content should blend with native content, while allowing you to tell an individualized story on each social media platform.

2. **Content should not interrupt.** If a social media platform is meant to entertain, then the content you post must entertain the platform’s audience. Remember your content should benefit your audience, not cause interruption.

3. **Jabs should be generous, funny, informative, and inspiring.** The value of jabs to you is to build an emotional connection. Consumers are then more likely to share emotional content with a friend and remember you when it is time to sell or buy a house. Your jabs allow you to give first, before asking someone to do business with you.
4. **Outstanding content leverages pop culture.** Engaging with pop culture shows potential clients you are relevant and that you can identify and understand what matters most to them.

5. **Think micro.** Small, unique nuggets of information, humor, commentary, or inspiration should inform your content strategy. Respond to today’s culture, conversations, and current events in real time in the social media platform’s native language and format.

6. **Outstanding social media content is consistent and self-aware.** In other words, outstanding content must help current and prospective clients understand who you are. The way you tell your story across each of the social media platforms can change, but the core story must remain the same as well as your personality and brand identity. Keep your message consistent in every social media setting.

Each of these steps has meaning for real estate professionals to create value for consumers. Social media must fit in naturally along the customer’s path to everyday living as well as making a purchase decision.

**THINK POINT #2: Understanding the Big Five**

**Facebook**

Facebook is considered the most familiar (and the most personal) social networking site. Vaynerchuk cites that over a billion consumers currently use Facebook, including 680 million who actively use the platform on a mobile device. This marketing tool can give real estate professionals insight into the lives and interests of potential clients. Consumers go to Facebook to catch up, connect, socialize, discover what others are doing, reading, listening to, wearing, eating, thinking, working, living, and where they are going.

**Tips for using Facebook most effectively:**

1. Keep posts short, simple, provocative, entertaining and/or even surprising
2. Use high-quality, engaging photos
3. Place your business’ logo visibly on pictures
4. Consider purchasing sponsored stories or page posts through Facebook’s advertising platform

**Twitter**

According to Vaynerchuk, Twitter is considered the second-most familiar social media platform with 100 million users in the US and 500 million users worldwide. Users are limited to sharing thoughts and pictures within a 140-word “Tweet.” Useful for news and information, real estate professionals can use this platform to make a statement, stake out a position among other agents,
and establish a voice in the marketplace. To accomplish these objectives, users need to skillfully spin, interpret, or remix news information in a unique style.

One advantage of Twitter for real estate professionals is that it allows users to initiate a relationship with potential clients. Vaynerchuck explains, “It is still the only platform where you can jump into a conversation unannounced and no one thinks you are a stalker.” Real estate professionals can publically share their Twitter profile and also use Twitter’s search and discover functions to find people who are talking about topics related to their homes, a new job, or real estate. Even if you only tangentially respond, you can add your own perspective and humor - and context - to the conversation. Take advantage of this platform because it is free and makes it possible to reach people who do not even know you exist.

**Tips for using Twitter most effectively:**

1. Spin your content to be authentic, to the point, so it resonates with the audience
2. Use high-quality, engaging photos
3. Use memorable hashtags (#) in your posts to gain attention and search-ability
4. Do not re-Tweet fan praise or nice things said about you – bragging is boring to your followers

**Instagram**

Engaging multiple platforms for marketing allows real estate professionals to use the platform where they have the most information to drive people to look across social media platforms. Users can also move data from one social media platform to another to increase their presence across new social media platforms. An example of this is that users can connect an Instagram account to Facebook and Twitter, which can increase awareness of business, product, or service.

Instagram is a photo-based platform owned by Facebook, and has over 130 million users. Vaynerchuk maintains that Instagram users upload more than 40 million photos per day and generate 1000 photo comments per second. As with Facebook and Twitter, real estate professionals can use Instagram to tell a story, reinforce their name and brand, and build impressions. Instagram users can posts photos, and viewers can “like” a photo and offer comments to show public support of the content. Instagram photos are similar to high quality ads in magazines, but electronically accessible to an audience of over 100 million users. Best of all, sharing content is free.

**Tips for using Instagram most effectively:**

1. Instagram content should be unique, artistic, authentic, and non-commercial
2. Use multiple, descriptive hashtags (#) to help viewers discover and connect with your brand
**Pinterest**

Most people may not think to use Pinterest as a marketing tool to build a real estate business, but as Vaynerchuk indicates, Pinterest boasts more than 48 million users (16% of all Internet users). Additionally, 68% of Pinterest users in the US are women, half of which are mothers.

Pinterest makes it easy for consumers to engage in online research and share ideas in one place on virtual bulletin boards called “pinboards.” Boards allow users to “pin” and organize images, recipes, etc. for future accessibility. Pinboards showcase images that help consumers represent who they are and who they would like to be.

Pinterest is becoming a powerful marketing tool and a natural fit for real estate professionals because it is a platform consumers use to discover and develop material and emotional wish lists. Aspiration and acquisition are also powerful motivators that drive people to make purchase decisions, and Pinterest reinforces both. A survey by Steelhouse shows that Pinterest users are 79% more likely to purchase or use something they spot on Pinterest versus Facebook (Steelhouse 2012). Also, Pinterest produces four times the revenue per click of Twitter.

**Tips for using Pinterest most effectively:**

1. Make sure all pins are visually appealing. Consider pinning a unique and/or elegant photo from each of your listings (e.g., a stunning staircase or an ornate fireplace) to drive interest in your page
2. All pins should link back to your website so that viewers can take action to become a client
3. Make sure you have high quality content, photos, and/or aspirational messages. Pinterest users usually get to a page by following images they see being re-pinned by others
4. Create a catchy caption to spark users’ interest

**Tumblr**

Real estate professionals should also consider Tumblr to increase their social media presence. Tumblr is a microblogging social media platform that allows users to post content in a blog format. Vaynerchuk explains that Yahoo-owned Tumblr has 132 million monthly users and generates 60 million new posts every day. The platform ranks number one in average number of minutes spent per visit, whereas Facebook ranks number three. Unlike the other social media platforms, Tumblr is not for everyone, attracting a younger crowd (primarily 18-34 year olds), and slightly favors women.

Real estate professionals can greatly benefit from using Tumblr as a marketing tool. Unlike Facebook and Twitter (which guide social connections through who you know), Tumblr makes
connections for according to the interests of the people using it. Tumblr is a great social media platform for helping potential clients find you.

One special feature unique to Tumblr (and blogs in general) is the animated GIF (Graphics Interchange Format), which is a moving picture or animation. Consumers are more likely to engage with moving pictures than with still ones. GIFs are new to social media and contain elements of surprise and wonder. They function like moving emoticons and become a vehicle for self-expression. Another great feature of Tumblr is that you can display links to your Facebook, Twitter, and personal or company website.

Tips for using Tumblr most effectively:

1. Know your audience and tell a story (rather than self-promotion)
2. Take advantage of pop culture by posting content that will attract clients.
3. Add animated GIFs to create additional interest

Conclusion

Vaynerchuk emphasizes that social media content is most powerful when is un-intrusive, adds value for consumers, and fits along the customer’s decision-making path. Consider how you can reach more potential clients using these five unique social media platforms.

Recommended Reading


References


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Susan, a graduate student from Houston, TX, earned her Bachelor's degree in English from Vanderbilt University and her Master's in Elementary Education from University of Houston. Before enrolling at Baylor, she taught first grade for 11 years in Highland Park ISD, in Dallas, TX. Susan is currently pursuing an MBA in General Business with plans to transition into a financial services role.