Your online reputation will make or break your business

Successful agents know real estate is, and always will be, a relationship business. But it's also true that technology is fundamentally changing how we build and leverage that trust — after all, we now routinely ride in strangers' cars and stay in strangers' homes on vacation because we trust the reviews of other strangers.

Referrals and recommendations used to be one-to-one, word-of-mouth opportunities, but it's now possible to win clients through social proof — the validation from other consumers that your service is valuable.

If you've ever booked an Airbnb because Barbara in Helena, Montana, swore it was a great experience, then you can imagine why an agent with 100 positive reviews on a nationwide site might win out over an agent with a sparse web presence.

By baking social proof into your online strategy, you'll foster trust with prospects and sway them to reach out to you when they're ready to transact. With a smart online relationship management system, you'll rope in warmer leads, increase your close rates and generate more personal referrals.

Three steps to building up a formidable online reputation

It takes work and a clear process for agents to build up a social proof system that works. Here are three ways for any agent to get started.

Offer a turnkey process for online reviews

First and foremost, establish a system that allows your past clients to easily write a review at their convenience. Nothing will flatten a recommendation effort faster than sending a recommendation request with a complicated login process and a long, burdensome questionnaire.

Have a promotion plan ready to go

It's time to advertise your excellence. You need a system that promotes your recommendations so that leads and prospects see them all over the web. Publish reviews on SEO-optimized websites, share and boost them on social media, and turn them into ads that show up on the sites your prospects visit online. Last, be sure that your website prominently displays these glowing reviews from recent clients.

Make sure you ask for referrals

Recommendations may boost your ability to win over a new client base, but there's still nothing

better than a referral. If you're asking a past client to write you a positive review, ask for referrals at the same time.

They'll be more likely to directly refer since they're already in the process of remembering what a fantastic agent you are. Give them the opportunity to rave about your services by asking for the contact information of friends and family members that could use your help.

Marry face-to-face relationships with online recommendations to thrive

Business relationships still require personal touch to be effective, but online recommendations from clients are now an undeniable must.

To ensure you take full advantage of the opportunity to grow your business with social proof, look for a tool that streamlines and automates the process of collecting and promoting your recommendations. The technology should offer a simple way to request, publish and advertise reviews so you can amplify your business using the words and positive experiences of your happiest former customers..

SmartZip Analytics helps agents get ahead of their competition with its all-in-one platform that merges a proven predictive analytics engine with automated multi-channel marketing solutions, lead-calling and now an all-in-one online reputation management system. Visit smartzip.com *to learn more.*

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