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About 2 months ago [Erica Swallow](#) 36

How Real Estate Pros are Using Social Media for Real Results






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Over the past two years, real estate professionals have found creative ways to overcome the [real estate crisis](#), including finding innovative uses for social media. After facing drops in home sales [well into 2010](#), real estate pros have been forced to utilize their offline skills in an increasingly social way online. By using photo and video sharing to enhance listings, along with professional networking sites to hone their sales skills, real estate veterans have made strides in moving inventory in tough times.

Agents, brokers and realtors have found successes in lead generation, sales and brand building through use of mass audience social platforms, including [Twitter](#) , [Facebook](#) , [YouTube](#) , [Flickr](#) , [Meetup](#), and [LinkedIn](#) , as well as real estate specific platforms, like [Trulia](#), [Zillow](#), [WellcomeMat](#) and [Architizer](#).



Whether they are sharing videos, listings or advice with their communities and prospective buyers or sellers, real estate pros are making progress in using social media for real results.

Attracting Buyers and Sellers

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for The Corcoran Group. At the top, there's a search bar and navigation tabs for Wall, Info, iPhone App, Do More, Photos, and The Scoop. Below the header, there's a section titled "Connect with The Corcoran Group" featuring several promotional cards:

- NEW DEVELOPMENTS:** Browse homes for sale in the world's most desirable new addresses. Accompanied by an image of a modern building.
- IPHONE APP:** Find homes for sale or rent, open houses & more near you anytime. Accompanied by a map showing a location at 785 Fifth Avenue, New York.
- YOUTUBE CHANNEL:** Watch "The Scoop", our series of interviews with CEO Pam Liebman. Accompanied by a photo of Pam Liebman.
- FACEBOOK FAN PAGE:** Become a fan & get real estate news, insights, exclusives, advice & more. Accompanied by a small thumbnail of the Facebook profile.
- TWITTER:** Corcoran_Group. A tweet from the account is shown: "I posted 3 photos on Facebook in the album 'Our New iPhone Ad Campaign' http://bit.ly/76PT58".
- TWITTER (NEWEST LISTINGS):** Corcoran_Newest. A tweet is shown: "New Hamptons Rental: Wainscott http://bit.ly/6W6KNN".
- FOURSQUARE:** Follow us on FourSquare & find out where Corcoran is right now. Accompanied by an "I ♥ BK" logo.
- GOWALLA:** Follow us to see where we are, what we're doing & explore NYC with us. Accompanied by a Gowalla logo.

The core goal of real estate pros utilizing social media is to attract sellers looking to list their homes or buyers looking to purchase homes. Naturally, the 1.0 version of social media for real estate is setting up pages on social networks that fit your company's content and audience.

[Corcoran Group](#), the largest residential real estate firm in New York City, is a fitting example of how real estate agencies are going above and beyond to make themselves available for buyers and sellers. Corcoran differentiates itself by simply being available and open. The "Do More" tab on their Facebook page says it all – you can find them on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Foursquare](#), and [Gowalla](#), among other sites. And if you need more, you can download their [iPhone app](#), where you can find nearby homes for sale or rent and open houses. The app also promotes their Twitter, Facebook and YouTube pages. If you dig a little deeper, you can also find Corcoran on [Tumblr](#), [Blip.tv](#) and [Vimeo](#). Simply put, Corcoran has found a way to be everywhere for its clients. This is the first step to converting fans and followers into buyers and sellers.



Matthew Shadbolt, Director of Internet Marketing at The Corcoran Group, filled me in on Corcoran's social media strategy. As a lifestyle brand, Corcoran doesn't simply create a presence, they participate in it. For example, the Corcoran YouTube channel features CEO Pam Liebman answering questions posed by Facebook and Twitter followers regarding the [state of the housing market](#) and New York living tips. Furthermore, Shadbolt proactively leaves local neighborhood tips on Foursquare and Gowalla for users to find. He notes,

“We have created and implemented a comprehensive mobile marketing strategy of leaving tips around New York based on the huge wealth of local neighborhood knowledge which we specialize in at Corcoran. Our brand premise of communicating what it’s like to actually live in a neighborhood and what living in NYC is like ‘beyond the four walls of your apartment’ is a key driver behind this approach.”

Shadbolt went on to explain that revenue from social media had been substantial:

“The main thing we’ve seen is that the quality of the referral traffic back into our main website has significantly increased. Not only are we seeing more traffic coming in, but visitors coming in from social media sites are staying longer and looking at more things – something we had also seen with search engines but not in such large numbers. We have generated business through both Facebook and Twitter, primarily on the rentals side. People engaging with us directly on Facebook in particular has been increasing significantly over the past two months.”

Another company that seems to be doing well with attracting customers is [ApartmentHomeLiving.com](#), an apartment lifestyle guide and apartment finder. Their [Facebook](#) page is full of requests for apartments, which they promptly respond to with listings and ideas. They even have an admirable [YouTube](#) presence, with 1,600 videos,

totaling over 113,000 views in the past year.

Sharing Listings, Tours, and Showings



In the real estate world, listings, open houses and tours are the main stepping stones towards making a sale, and the digital world has made those steps much easier.

Corcoran, for example, recently created a [Twitter account](#), strictly for new listings, to accommodate demand. Meanwhile, the [main Corcoran Twitter account](#) stays fresh with local and industry news.

WellcomeMat, the largest community of real estate professionals, brokerages and filmmakers using full-motion real estate video tours to market themselves and properties, has made producing and sharing video property tours easier, as well. With a community of 18,000 real estate professionals, WellcomeMat serves real estate agencies, brokerages and firms of all sizes, and also partners with and powers video for some of the nations top real estate brokerages including Halstead, Weichert and Prudential Douglas Elliman.

The service offers over 3,000 local production teams for those who don't have videographers on staff, and also allows for easy integration with your website and YouTube channel. Users can also take advantage of automated link distribution into Facebook, Twitter and Craigslist , and the advanced reporting tools offered.

Phil Thomas Di Giulio, Co-Founder of WellcomeMat, explained in depth how real estate pros are using the full-service video platform to make an impact on their bottom lines:

“The majority of the videos being uploaded to WellcomeMat involve property tours, neighborhood profiles, brokerage information and updates, or agency advertisements. The common identifier with each of the videos is their ability to engage and capture the

imagination of the viewer online while delivering quality information about a property, place, person or town.

“Video enables agents and brokerages to share this local knowledge and connect with consumers in a whole new way. This is very important because consumers are more likely to work with an agent [or brokerage] who displays superior knowledge about the local area which they represent.”

After generating a lead, there are many options for scheduling, but one of the newest and easiest-to-use services is Tungle.me, a service that promises to mitigate “double bookings, time zone mishaps, or email ping pong.”



[Drew Burks](http://DrewBurks.com), 2008 San Diego Real Estate Broker of the Year, uses Tungle .me to schedule company meetings with his agents, new Realtor recruitment meetings, and to schedule showings on his listings. Burks elaborated on how his brokerage is continuing to experiment with the service:

“I believe [Tungle.me] will increase our agent showings, because there won’t be the missed calls and confusion over showing times, especially when the seller doesn’t allow us to use a lockbox on their property [where a spare key may be stored]. This technology is proving to be much more effective than scheduling appointments and showings via the telephone.”

Lending Expert Advice

While an occasional listing may be appreciated by your social media community, many experts advocate engaging your audience with industry knowledge and an expert perspective, rather than alienating users with useless information. Because there are so many factors that must align to make a listing pertinent to a single customer, such as pricing, location and size, there is a high probability that most listings do not pertain to most people in a given social media audience.

James Kimmons, real estate business expert on About.com, advises real estate pros to refrain from overwhelming their followers and connections with real estate listings. He [advises](#),

“Promote you, your business, and your expertise in your local area real estate market. Do it with market commentary, education and statistics. Link out to your IDX search page, because a lot of your visitors will want to look at listings at some point, just not your listing du jour.”

There are many sites with specialized sections for real estate professionals to lend their expertise, such as [Trulia Voices](#) and [Zillow Advice](#). Both sites are frequented by prospective home buyers, on the search for answer about topics ranging from pricing and relocating to financing and closing. A [typical question](#) on either site will yield quite a few answers from agents or brokers specializing in a specific geographic region or area of real estate. This type of interaction with folks on the market is a great way to build a credible reputation and build brand recognition for future consideration.

YouTube also presents a valid platform for sharing real estate tips. For example, [Keller Williams Realty International](#), a real estate franchise company, maintains a YouTube channel full of videos on monthly real estate reports, real estate advice and current company events. Keller Williams boasts nearly 400,000 video views, 100,000 channel views and 2,000 subscribers. Those are numbers worth celebrating.

If you are a real estate professional, keep an eye out ways you to showcase your expertise and local knowledge.

You should start to see an increase in interaction, as you provide useful, relevant information to others.

Connecting with Other Real Estate Professionals

In order to improve upon their skills and network in the industry, real estate professionals are using social networks specific to their industry. Some of these networks include [ActiveRain](#) and [The Flipping Pad](#).

Although it is in beta testing, [Architizer](#) is the largest crowd-sourced database of architecture online, with over 10,000 finished and proposed projects posted from fans, owners and architects that are easily searchable. The site provides a networking space for real estate developers and architects, where developers can search for architects and architects can upload their projects. This type of social network is allowing developers to get a better grasp of the talent options on the market, while also giving architects a better chance at being discovered.

CEO and Co-Founder Marc Kushner, also an architect, explains that, “The old model revolved around magazines, in which architects had to make it into certain issues. So, say that that a developer picks up the November issue of a certain architecture magazine. The only way that the architect would have the chance of being discovered by the developer was if he happened to be in that November issue.” Architizer simplifies the connecting process by bringing architects and developers together in one place.

More well-known social networks, including Meetup, Flickr and LinkedIn are provided spaces for real estates pros to connect and learn from one another. Some examples of active Meetup groups include [Chicago Real Estate Group](#) and [New Jersey Real Estate Social Network](#). Both Meetups are ranked highly and have received favorable feedback from attendees. For example, Loan Officer [Lorna Roberts](#), said that the New Jersey Real Estate Social Network Meetup, is an “excellent way to network and learn more about what is affecting the community and businesses.” For more information on how to get a real estate Meetup started in your community, check out our

tips on [organizing a successful Meetup](#).

Other group settings on social networks, such as the National Association of REALTORS on [LinkedIn](#), or the Photography for Real Estate group on [Flickr](#), are great places to connect with specialized professionals in the real estate industry.

From connecting with buyers and sellers to networking with industry peers and lending expert advice, there are many ways to utilize social media as a real estate professional. What are your tips for using social media in the real estate industry?

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