

# Go Social to Get Local Leads

Online marketing requires more time and effort than money

By Nathan Rufty

There are so many marketing avenues that mortgage companies and loan originators can spend their time, energy and money on to increase their purchase and refinance business that trying to figure out the best method can be a challenge.

The way to grab attention and generate business has changed over the years. It will continue to develop in the future, so you need to change with the times and get on board with the latest methods.

Break the cycle of using old-school marketing methods like cold calling, radio and print media. Today, you need to go direct — to where consumers are — and that is online.

## Leads versus closings

Everyone can get leads. The goal is to increase closings, so spending time and money on leads that don't result in closed loans is a waste of resources. It is important to monitor the time and effort you spend to generate leads to ensure a profitable rate of return.

Plenty of avenues exist online where you can spend money to generate calls. Take pay-per-click ads on Google, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and other social media sites, for example. These can generate leads at an affordable cost or be a waste of good money depending on the filters you set, which determine who sees the ads.

Unfortunately, too many loan originators throw money at the problem thinking it will cure their low lead count, but this is the wrong direction to take. Spending money can cure the immediate issue — your emotional need to get more leads now — but that will only leave you even more frustrated and disappointed later on.

Generating a steady stream of quality on-line leads requires setting goals and establishing a strategy to reach those goals. This will allow you to see where you are spending your time and money and help to ensure you aren't throwing money at the problem unwisely.

Before spending any money to generate leads, you need to make sure you are going to deliver the right messages to consumers. Do not distort your message with services you can't support or you will end up with leads that don't actually want to do business with you, because they responded based on the wrong message.

## Online marketing methods

It seems plenty of companies today are trying to sell their proven system to increase leads. Of course, they never call and say, "Do you have a moment to discuss how to increase your closings and, in turn, increase your monthly income?"

The systems these companies are trying to sell are an added expense and are generally slow to generate leads. Instead, let's look at some methods for generating leads and closings on your own that cost little to no money, and don't have the added expense of paying someone else to do it.

The pay-per-click, or PPC, method mentioned earlier searches for consumers who are browsing social media and have expressed some interest in home loans through their online activity. This may be a low interest on their part, however. It's best to look for qualified buyers and refinance borrowers who are serious about a home loan. Still, even if these leads may be mostly fence sitters, they are good to add to your database so you can

continue to follow up with them, even if they don't take immediate action.

Two other great avenues for generating closings — and not just leads — are social media and blogging. You can take advantage of all the free sites available today by creating videos to post on social media and writing blog articles, and then creating a landing web page where you offer free e-books or whitepapers that are geared toward specific types of borrowers.

You can provide free information on how to purchase a home with no money down, for example, or how to save for a downpayment. You can list and describe first-time homebuyer programs or tips for cleaning up credit reports. There are a ton of marketing ideas you can use for free to generate qualified leads.

Consumers who are actively searching online for lending services and information are more apt to be serious prospects. Make your

Continued >>



**Nathan Rufty** is a mortgage coach and trainer with Mortgage Marketing Pros, a company that works with loan officers to develop marketing plans that increase leads and closed loans. Mortgage Marketing Pros was created by a producing loan officer and a master marketer to teach mortgage professionals how to create their own businesses without relying so much on one or two streams that can dry up without warning. For more information, visit [mortgagemarketingpros.com](http://mortgagemarketingpros.com). Reach Rufty at (909) 731-1218.

---

<< Continued

online presence known with free sites such as YouTube, Yelp, Facebook business page, Google Local, LinkedIn and blog sites. Blanket your local social media market, so prospects searching online can find you and do business with you.

### Getting started

To get started on creating your online presence, do some research by typing in keywords to find ideas on what to blog about and what videos to create. You may notice that not many originators in your local market are putting in any effort to write blogs or post videos, which means you can own that space.

Next, find a spot for your blog articles. Free sites where you can blog about your services in your local market include Tumblr, Blogger.com, WordPress and Squarespace. If you have a website already, there should be

options there for writing blogs. Writing a blog is one of the best free methods to improve your page-one search ranking.

Creating videos today is easy with smart phones. Make a video about a new loan product your company offers, for example, and post it to your social media sites. Make sure to add a call to action to the video and the post. This will help drive traffic to your targeted web page. Post the video on YouTube and add key search terms when posting to increase your exposure.

Once you are done with your first blog and video, inform the people in your database and ask them to comment, share and like to spread your reach. Many social media sites offer the opportunity of promoting your posts at a cost. If you wish to push your blog and video efforts out to more people, setting a budget — which can be low — will be easy at this point because the work is already done.

Don't forget to develop a marketing plan for your online efforts and stick to it. Abandoning your plan early will result in false traffic readings. Stay with it for at least 90 days to see real results from your efforts. Finally, make sure your marketing efforts are in compliance with your company's guidelines. The last thing you want is to get a phone call from a regulator stating you violated a marketing or advertising rule.



Building an online marketing presence can be very profitable for those originators willing to put in the time and effort. With all the free tools available online, you can easily take advantage of social media to show local consumers searching for mortgage lending products that you are the local expert who can assist them with their big decision. ■