

REAL ESTATE

SOUND OFF

Which home marketing tools do you find most effective?



A: To ensure that sellers are getting the highest possible sales price, my goal is always to cast the widest marketing net possible. The cornerstone of a highly successful campaign starts with a multitude of professional, high-definition photos of the home, as well as a few of the neighborhood amenities.

These photos are the first and most important impression of the home.

The photos are integrated into a plan of local, regional, national and international exposure, including mailers, brochures, a property website and online MLS services. Posting property photos on social media sites and other websites such as SFGate.com helps grab the attention of buyers who are looking to relocate.

It is important to reach all the way out to international buyers as well. Photo-rich international online and print publications are becoming increasingly important with the influx of foreign investors, who in some cases never actually visit the home before they purchase it.

But just like any marketing campaign it takes a highly skilled and savvy real estate agent to manage demand and negotiate the highest possible sales price.

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A: The Internet has transformed the way buyers search for homes. Buyers are no longer reliant on the newspaper for open houses. Since more than 90 percent of home buyers find the home they purchase online, Internet presence should be an essential component of your real estate agent's marketing plan.

To effectively market a property and get the best price and terms, you will want an agent who knows how to make your home stand out among the hundreds of other home listings online. You need to have professional photos properly formatted for each website to show your home in the best light. The average buyer views 10 homes before making an offer. You want your home to be seen first.

While online marketing is how we reach a large share of potential buyers, your agent should still provide all the tried-and-true offline marketing methods. Widely read newspapers such as The San Francisco Chronicle provide a large audience of potential buyers for your home. Home sellers still benefit from The Chronicle open house ads, postcard mailers and direct marketing to the surrounding neighborhood.

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A: The best marketing tools are friends, family and past clients. This is the core of being able to pass your name along and let others know what a great job you did.

My website is another great resource, as most people like to look before they buy or sell. Having valuable and useful resources on there has proven to drive traffic to my site.

In addition, having a proactive Web designer helps keep your search engine optimization credits up — after all, you want these to be dynamic. Specific property websites continue to offer a more descriptive nature to properties. Since 90 percent of people begin their searches online, this continues to be an effective method to attract buyers.

Social media is another way of keeping in front of friends. Many people keep in contact through postings in order to stay relevant and keep themselves in front of others.

Obviously, populating other sites through the MLS and being proactive entering into the likes of Trulia and Zillow keeps your properties in front of potential clients.

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SFGate.com

► What it sold for: Complete listings of bay Area home sales at www.sfgate.com/homesales

DATA POINT

58%

Average increase in income per household in San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood since 2000. The population of that area has grown 33 percent during that same time period.

Source: San Francisco Association of Realtors

Couple refinance condo to get better rate, pay off faster

Mortgage adviser: Shawn Sidhu.

Property type: Two-bedroom, 1,291-square-foot condo in San Jose.

Property value: \$500,000.

Loan amount: \$225,000.

Loan type: Refinance 3.75 percent with no points.

Backstory: Sidhu's clients are a couple in their late-30s with no children who wanted to refinance their mortgage.

They owed \$274,000 on their condo before paying it down to a remaining balance of \$225,000.

In November they had refinanced their mortgage into a 30-year fixed, but they chose to transition to a 20-year fixed because the interest rate was more favorable and it enabled them to pay off the mortgage faster.

The couple decided to



JUST APPROVED

refinance now, since there is wide speculation that the Federal Reserve will stop contributing to bond purchasing.

Such an action will likely lead to a rise in interest rates before the end of the calendar year.

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Just Approved yourself?
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