

TWITTER FOR REAL ESTATE

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Twitter. It's fast, it's impersonal and at the same time it's very personal. In the 4.5 years I have been a member, here are my statistics:

- 23,180 Tweets
- 43,490 Followers (as of 6:19 PM Thursday night)
- Following 12,824 people back (same time frame)

HOWEVER: most of my true Twitter friends, those people I have met in real life and then those I have never met but who send me referral business, those were made at the "under 500" follower and following stage. That's the place in platform where you should concentrate on. The rest is just really noisy.

MY KEY POINTS ON USING TWITTER

1. What Happens When a New Client Calls You

Before you get the first phone call from a potential client, they have already looked at your online profile. This means you better be great online. No room for error. Keep that in mind.

2. How to Build a Profile or Make Yours Better

Make it interesting, fresh, personal, real, and use your name somewhere.

My Twitter handle is my business @blendrealestate, but my name is everywhere. I do not hide. I am personally VERY easy to find, understand and talk to.

3. Photography

Make it great! Switch it up. One or two pics of you are not enough. I edit all my pictures myself in Picasa and keep it very fresh. I change my social media imagery at least once a month. My background was custom made for \$5 by a woman in Croatia through Fiverr. She did all my social media headers. If you want her name, just ask.

4. You're Thinking: "I'm here - Where are My Clients?"

Being on Twitter is probably NOT the best place to win over buyers and sellers.

But it's now part of your online reputation and resume. And it's the most "alive" social media platform. If you want to talk to me, you can write to me at Twitter and expect a personal response within an hour. So please consider being there yourselves and being very engaged.

5. Why Can't I Get Clients There?

It's not humanly possible to hook buyers and sellers into your fabulous-ness with 140 characters at a time. Twitter is simply too fast and messy for that. It's a live micro-blog of

thousands of topics at once. It's simply not for winning clients, but rather for building a strong online presence.

6. How to Get Referrals from Other Agents

The first thing I did on Twitter was follow lots and lots of real estate agents and spent a lot of time of talking to them by saying Hello, checking in on them and asking for NOTHING. Just let a nice friendship develop. By the way, those are the people now sending me referrals. It takes years but it's 100% real. I would consider those people part of my team for life, and I would send them absolutely anyone as a referral to them.

Referrals were a surprise and nothing I ever expected. My clients have received financing and refinancing with my favorite Twitter lenders. All in San Diego.

7. The Management of Your Account

Keep your profile partly real estate related, partly personal. Make sure you check the "notifications" button on your home screen to see who has talked to you, who has retweeted your or "Favorited" something you said. Make sure you thank every single one and follow every single one.

I used to hyper manage my account. In fact, the last time I talked to just SDAR about Twitter was in 2012, and I was doing that. I followed only those who followed me, then unfollowing if they unfollowed me. It was a lot of crazy work. After the SDAR convention in April 2012, in fact on that day, I no longer felt this was going to work for me. Maybe talking about it out loud changed me. Forever!

- Now I never unfollow anyone unless I catch an unpleasant tweet or if your entire profile tells how to get 1,000 followers.
 - I no longer know or check or care who unfollows me.
 - I follow up to 100 random people a week who interest me every week.
 - Leave no Tweet unanswered.
 - You can't always be the last word, but try.
 - Retweet three people every day to be nice. Always be nice. And Favorite everything and anything you like. That's the Twitter secret weapon of love.
 - This is the place where I will truly "free flow" my thoughts and likes. But I rarely put up a real estate post about my business. Only 1 out of ten posts is about real estate, and maybe 1 out of 25 is about my business. It's actually a PERSONAL site, not a BUSINESS site.
 - My niches always get attention: posting about vintage homes once owned by the mob, and New York homes.
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- Right now, my new thing is three homes throughout the country for *X price*. Readers vote for their favorite and I always list my favorite first.

- I spend a lot of time tweeting the news, current events, and live police scanner events. It's a place of getting and giving breaking news and I try to do my part.

8. No Complaining

The Library of Congress is now keeping every Tweet. 200 years from now, you don't want to be known as the real estate from San Diego who complained about not getting your upgrade on Delta or talking moments of misery in your life. Edit your typing before you type it. Clients will read it.

9. Be a Nice Person.

If there's one thing we all like, whether we'd hire you or not, is your kindness. It's probably the Number 1 thing I have been told about my Tweets when being sent a referral: "You're so nice!"

10. Be the Person You'd Want to Hire.

Think of it as a permanent resume of your activities and thoughts, but try a little restraint on food or drink photos. Talk naturally about things that you like which are funny or pleasant. No one wants to see your listings, sorry! I learned this from my first Twitter friend who was in the business of selling real estate leads and he was outrageous. Clint Miller passed away two years ago of brain cancer, and before that he taught me a ton about what not to do.

11. Blocking People

I have blocked a few people on Twitter mainly for being offensive, too aggressive and/or extremely unusual or strange. You might go through waves of certain *types* following you: I go through rappers from Philadelphia, don't ask me why; girls in porn, real estate agents, some celebs, lots of lenders and the rest is a mixed bag.

12. Be Interesting in What You Post

Post lots of imagery and fresh stories with short links. I use TinyURL. I also get cool stuff from Zite, the NY Times, LA Times and other quirky sites. My balance is maybe 30% retweets, 25% shout outs (how are you?) and the rest live Tweets from me.

Absolutely no auto tweeting, no scheduled tweets, no Hootsuite or other products. Disastrous results -- there are those people who never turn off auto tweets.

That makes you look like you're not really "there" during, for example, a national disaster (Hurricane Sandy, Sandy Hook shootings, any shootings, etc.).

13. Put Your Twitter Handle on Your Marketing Material

To be honest, the cards I am using right this moment are an art project in and of themselves, from Moo.com and they have no social media references.

But I have other "every day cards" with all my social media names. And my website is amped up with social media icons that take you to all my activity.

14. What Should You Say on Twitter?

Always use full transparency, be you, but never talk about deals or clients specifically.

It is OK to be the person they want to hire but talk very little about real estate. Passive marketing - that is what Twitter is and it's different than direct marketing which you should also do outside of social media.

15. How Much Time Should You Spend on Twitter?

I spend about 1.5 hours on social media a day, spread out over about 12+ hours.

16. Remember, Your Clients are Not Calling You to Socialize. Keep Your Eye on Business.

These notes are excerpts from a presentation at the 2014 San Diego County REALTOR Expo & Conference on April 11, 2014

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