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**7 Ways to Turn Your Website Into a
Lead Generation Machine**

Forget a fancy office and expensive business cards. The number one thing that every mortgage professional needs today is a website. In our online-oriented world, your website is your digital office and a key way for potential borrowers to find information about you, your business and mortgages in general. But, your website needs to do more than give a great first impression. Consider these seven tips to turn your website into a lead generation superpower.

Help people find your website

Before you can impress future clients with your fantastic, informative website, you have to help them find it — and the key is content. Constantly creating new content is a great way to make sure that your site shows up in search engine results. Keep your website updated with relevant, market-specific information, news and tools. Integrating a blog into your website is one way to keep content fresh without having to change the overall site design too often (a well-written blog also goes a long way toward demonstrating your expertise in your local market).

Also, maximize your search engine optimization efforts by loading up your website with plenty of relevant keywords. Most website management tools have a way to evaluate specific keywords for both your overall site and specific pages. When you're brainstorming keywords, think of the words and phrases you would use when searching for a specific topic. For example, if you've written a blog post about mortgage rate trends in your local market (say, Los Angeles), some appropriate keywords would be mortgage interest rate, 30-year, Los Angeles, trends and 2016.

Finding productive keywords is an ever-evolving process, so test out different keyword strategies to see which ones produce the most traffic on your site. Free tools like Google Analytics can help you track your progress.

Target your specific audience

Depending on where you live, there are probably several other local lenders with mortgage websites. Set yourself apart by making sure that every word, phrase, photo and tip on your site speaks to the specific audience you'd like to target. What is your specialty? Perhaps you're an expert in VA Loans, or you're great with people who are looking to refinance a loan. Make sure you're speaking directly to the audience you seek and demonstrating why you're the best fit for their mortgage needs.

Put rates front and center

The primary reason potential buyers seek out a lender's website is to gain access to rates, so don't bury them on a secondary page of your site. Put rates front and center on the home page and make the search functionality simple and easy to use.

Your rates tool should be comprehensive and include several different loan types as well fields for the loan purpose, amount, down payment and credit score. Gathering as much of this information as you can early on in the process makes things easier for both you and your borrowers.

When your rates are extensive, easy to search and understandable to the borrower, your website becomes the go-to resource for leads browsing rates online — and makes them more likely to contact you when they're ready to move forward.

Capture contact information with opt-in perks

Your potential clients are more likely to return to your website and engage with you if you provide other useful information like current mortgage news, mortgage calculator tools, industry trends and customized rate updates. Offer these extras to people who register on your site via a simple form on the home page.

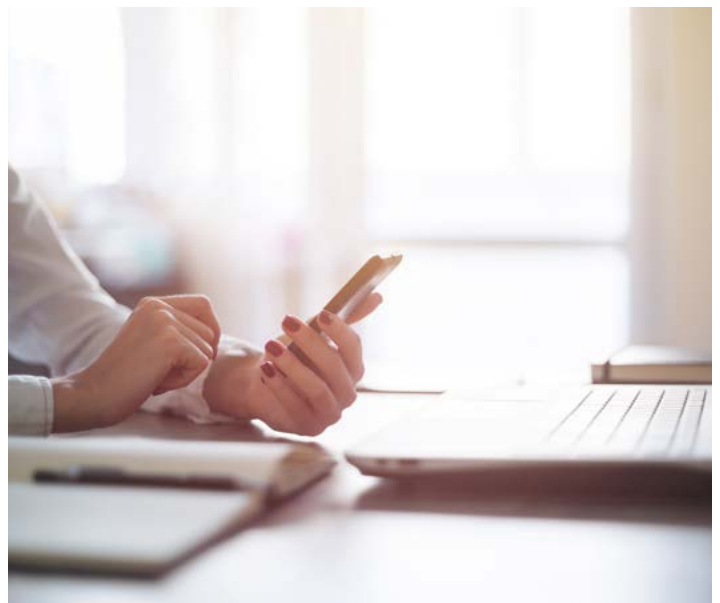
Once users are signed in, you'll start receiving a mountain of valuable information that can help you convert these leads, including the type of mortgage loan they need, whether or not they're looking to refinance, what time of day they tend to focus on their mortgage rate search, their price range and more. With so much data, you can easily follow up with relevant, personalized responses.

Remember, the registration process should be short and simple. You'll glean most of the information about your prospects from their search habits on your website, so don't make them jump through too many hoops. Simply ask for a name, phone number and email address.

Keep your messaging simple

Don't overwhelm leads with too many pages, too much content or a confusing site structure. On every page, make sure to keep your message clear and straightforward. Anticipate what kind of information leads are looking for on a specific page and aim to answer all questions they might have. Avoid industry jargon and focus on being conversational, yet informative.

Additionally, let visitors to your website know exactly what you want them to do on each page by including simple, encouraging and short calls to actions (CTAs). CTAs can be buttons, links or brief instructions that help visitors know where to find additional information or move forward in learning more.



Demonstrate your value

The key to converting leads to clients is showing them why they should want to work with you, but without making your website all about you. Of course you want to include a headshot and a short list of your qualifications, but strive to make your website all about your clients and what you can do for them. Tell them exactly why you're the best fit, and demonstrate what you can do to help them with their mortgage needs.

One way to showcase your strengths is to let your past clients speak on your behalf by including client reviews or testimonials. Post a handful of quotes that illustrate your client-focused work ethic. Today's consumers put a lot of trust in online customer reviews for everything from restaurants to roofers, and searching for a lender is no different. A few well-written reviews provide a tremendous opportunity for you to highlight your skills.

Respond quickly

After doing the work to help potential clients find your website, giving them the information they need and demonstrating your value as a mortgage professional, you're ready for the next step in the conversion process—communicating with clients who reach out to you directly! Whether it's by phone, email, text or social media, your first contact with a client is the most important. That's why responding quickly is crucial. Set a goal to respond to every lead within 5 minutes. What if you're in a meeting, on vacation, or it's the middle of the night? Most contact management systems allow for customized automated responses, meaning your system can send a quick text or email letting a lead know that you've received their request and will get back to them as soon as possible.

Summary

Turning your website into a lead generation machine requires two main strategies: using technology to improve discoverability and thinking about your clients' needs to improve conversion. Search engine optimization, personalized rate-finding tools and contact management tools can simplify the technological component, so make sure that the system you're using is doing the heavy lifting for you (a Mortech Lender Website can do all these tasks and more).

Once your technology is working for you, you should always be thinking about what your potential clients are looking for. Anticipate their requests, answer their questions and provide them with the tools and information they expect. After all, if you're giving them everything they need to make the mortgage process enjoyable and stress-free, what reason do they have to work with anyone but you?