

AGENT | MARKETING

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The marketing timeline every first-year real estate agent should live by

What to do and when for a successful career launch

BY CHRISTY MURDOCK EDGAR

NOV 28

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When you first get your [real estate license](#), your head may be filled with questions of writing contracts, previewing properties and closing processes. When you ask about these things, however, the answer from brokers and colleagues is usually, “Don’t worry about that. Just worry about getting clients.”

Although it’s a frustrating answer, it rings true. Most agents leave real estate because of too few clients, not because of an obscure contractual clause. But coming up with a marketing plan can be difficult for new agents, in part because it’s tough to sell yourself when you have so little practical experience.

But everyone has to start somewhere, so here is a timeline to take you through your first year as a [real estate agent](#).

Month 1

- Have [professional headshots](#) taken to be used on personalized business cards, website and social media marketing. Your brokerage may offer opportunities for this from time to time, or you can Google “headshots near me” and take a look at local photographers’ galleries to see who has a style you like best. Don’t be constrained by the old blazer and crossed arms look. Many agents choose a more relaxed, approachable look for their headshots.
- If your brokerage does not provide them, order [business cards](#) with your new headshot and your preferred phone number and email. Don’t order a huge number of these, and don’t order the most expensive ones you can find. Over the next few months, you will no doubt replace them, add social media accounts or have other changes. Just find a decent, affordable card, and be sure and include the information required by your state’s laws and your brokerage guidelines.
- Begin developing your [sphere of influence](#) by gathering mailing addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of everyone you know — friends, family, acquaintances, church members, neighbors and more. This will form the basis of your initial marketing, but you must continue to add to this list — daily, if possible.
- [Create a spreadsheet](#) to organize the contact information for your sphere. Initially you may want to store it in Excel or Google Sheets, but eventually you will want to purchase a [customer relationship management \(CRM\)](#) software subscription to better facilitate communication with your list.
- Reach out to everyone on your list this month, preferably through a [handwritten note](#) with one or two of your business cards inside. Don’t be shy — let them know you are licensed and that you welcome their referrals. Follow up with a phone call to discuss and ask them if they know anyone who is thinking of buying or selling real estate.

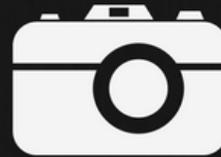
Month 2

1,000 friends on your list right now, so begin creating monthly goals that will help you get there. Attend and create networking opportunities, participate in lead gen activities through your brokerage and keep the focus on feeding that database.

- If you didn't do so at onboarding, **create a personal website and social media accounts** for your business. Choose a phrase that you can use across all of your accounts to tie them together. Don't have a URL under your name, a Facebook account under your town and a Twitter handle under some other phrase. Be consistent with name, **logo**, **colors** and images so that people who find you on Twitter can go to your website and know they're in the right place.
- **Create a schedule for posting on social media.** You will be tempted to go overboard and post obsessively in an effort to boost your followers and likes. A schedule will help you control this impulse and post consistently and steadily without sucking up all of your time.
 - For Facebook: Post once per day
 - For Twitter: Post once or twice per day, retweet or quote tweet five to 10 times daily
 - For Instagram: Post once per day

Marketing Timeline

A GUIDE FOR FIRST-
YEAR REAL ESTATE
AGENTS



MONTH 1

- Get professional headshots taken
- Order your business cards
- Develop your sphere of influence
- Create and organize your database
- Handwrite notes to everyone on your list



MONTH 2

- Continue building list
- Create a personal



Months 3-6

- Now that you have a basic setup, an audience to talk to and a bit of experience under your belt, you'll want to begin coming up with a **branding concept**. Although this may include visual elements like logo, font or signature colors, it's primary purpose will be to help you position yourself within your market and find a focus for your marketing message.

marketing and social media to scale faster and reach out both within and beyond those communities. This enables you to build a sales pipeline faster and for less cost than traditional marketing methods.”

- Wondering **what to say to your audience?** Here are some tips:
 - Keep in mind [Gary Vaynerchuk's formula: Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook](#). That means to share meaningful, valuable information with your audience several times before asking them for their business. That way you are coming from a place of service rather than a place of sales.
 - Keep in mind [Stacey Cohen's 3 W's](#) for great branding:
 - WIFM (What's in it for me?) to target client pain points
 - Pass the “who cares?” test by finding out how you can add value
 - Include the wow-factor when you figure out what you do that no one else in your space can do

Months 7-12

Now is the time to refine and expand on the marketing you did in the first six months as an agent.

You probably have a few clients under your belt, and you probably better understand what you love and don't love, what you're good at and what you struggle with, and you can do a better job of understanding what you bring to the table for potential clients.



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- **Develop a client avatar** to determine who your ideal client is, then refine your online and social media marketing to better appeal to that ideal client. Determine demographic information like gender, age and potential price range. Even favorite brands, shows and other details can help you to flesh out the avatar and market more effectively.
- If you have a talent for writing, **consider adding a blog to your website**. Twice-monthly blog posts can help you highlight your market expertise, educate potential buyers and sellers, offer suggestions or just showcase your personality and your passion for real estate. As you begin to accumulate a number of posts, these can form the basis of your social media marketing plan as well, to help promote your services across platforms.
- Because you've spent several months working on your list, you should have a fairly robust collection of names and contact information. Nokhrin said, “Today an agent needs at least seven to 20 marketing touches before a prospect decides to engage in a conversation. When there are 1000-plus prospects in the pipeline, you can't reach out to each one personally.” He continues, “Pick the top 10 percent on the list to **focus personal efforts like calling or texting** while sending automated CMAs and market reports on a regular basis to everyone else.”
- If your list is still a little thin, it may be time to consider a **paid service or paid advertising** on social media to bulk it up with potential clients. When considering paid leads, keep your focus on **long-term ROI** to determine whether it is an efficient use of your marketing dollars. Track the amount you're spending on marketing, and compare to the conversions and commissions they produce. Although they may not bring you a client immediately, if they are producing more income than you're spending over the course of a year and putting additional leads into your pipeline for more long-term conversion efforts, they are worth the money.
- If you have **networked effectively in your area**, you may have come into contact with **bloggers or reporters** to partner with for local media and online mentions. Create a regular column for the local paper, or offer guest blogging services to a popular local blog. Offer a two-minute real estate roundup for the local radio or television station. This type of exposure can pay dividends over and over if you are regularly featured.

This should give you a great foundation for your marketing efforts as you start out in real estate. With consistent effort, you'll find that you've put systems and processes into place that can grow with you as you scale up and continue to pay dividends throughout your career.

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Frank Reali · Real estate broker at Safari Realty

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Rick Hoffman · Vice President at Renovate America News

Well said; the article is full of valuable tips not only for new agents but a great road map for agents that need a jump start. The key in my mind is execution and consistency. Also, don't forget the "Micro" side of real estate; select a neighborhood, market to obtain market share, and build around geography. Remember people move, houses don't.

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