

## How to use social proof to snatch more clients

Establish trust with potential buyers and sellers before you even meet them

BY LAURA URE

MAY 30

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It's no secret that people show their approval of others and conform their actions in the form of feedback, likes, reviews, becoming followers and even joining in other people's causes. This is part of human nature, the need to belong and the need for acceptance. When it comes to showcasing your brand, taking advantage of this phenomenon, known as **social proof**, is a no-brainer.

Before we jump into social proof and how to use it to create buzz around your brand, let's define it.

### What is social proof?

According to [Whatls.com](https://www.whatls.com), "Social proof is the influence that the actions and attitudes of the people around us (either in real life or online) have on our own behavior. The 'proof' element is the idea that if other people are doing it (or saying it), it must be correct."

**Social proof** is often associated with digital and social media marketing. It can manifest as an online mob or herd mentality that can influence or change individual opinions.

trust with potential clients.

As humans, we love confirmation from others before making decisions — that’s why we send our friends photos of shoes before we buy them. Or more appropriately, we send people the link to the listing we are thinking about buying as part of the decision-making process.



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Harnessing popular opinion is effective because people want to validate their opinions and decisions with a consensus. People feel the need to get approval before making a purchase, particularly a large one. And the same is true of the [real estate agent](#) they are going to work with.

## Getting on the bandwagon

Billions of people can’t be wrong, that’s what McDonald’s banks on when it showcases that billions upon billions have been served. Most societies adhere to the principle of accepting the general consensus, going with the crowd.

Before we buy something online, we want to see that others are buying it too, so we check how many reviews a certain product has. If a large number of people are booking the hotel room you’re looking at on Priceline, it must be good. That’s why they tell you how many rooms are left; if everyone else wants that room, you are more likely to book immediately.

Better yet, when Zillow sends you an email with listings you might like and writes, “People like you liked this home,” it’s social proof at its finest. After all, people are influenced by the opinions of their social group.

In real estate, this might be a hard message to convey, but it isn’t impossible. Talking about how many buyers you’ve put into their dream home or how many sellers you’ve worked with is a good start — but getting it to be even more personal is even better.

Take the neighborhood you farm for instance. If you’re working with five other people in that neighborhood, you must be the best agent to work with in that area. Multiple “just listed” postcards in the same area will help to drive this message home.

## It’s not what you know, but who you know

According to Avelyn Holcroft-Lewer’s Inman post, [“10 ways to create a social proof buzz for your real estate business,”](#) there are five different types of social proof:

## New Listing



● FOR SALE

\$479,000

4 bd, 3.0 ba, 2,294 sqft

9695 Palma Vista Way,  
Boca Raton, FL

People like you liked this home



“People like you liked this home,”  
Zillow’s flawless use of social proof.

actually worked with you.

There are various types of influencers who can help persuade and influence their audience, be it bloggers, micro-influencers, journalists, activists, experts, insiders, etc. Have you represented any in buying or selling a home? This can be pretty powerful if done correctly.

Sharing his or her experience working with you on his or her forum of choice can help you generate business and prove to be an [effective testimonial](#) on your website as well.

People will listen to those they follow and aspire to be, and because these influencers are not connected to your brand, their opinion will carry a greater weight.

## We’ve got your back

How many reviews do you have on [Zillow](#)? Hopefully plenty, but if you don’t, you should get on it. Zillow [isn’t the only place that you should have reviews](#); you should also have them on your website, Facebook, Google and any other trusted source.

such as an industry blogger.

- **Celebrity social proof:** Approval of your product or endorsements from celebrities.
- **User social proof:** Support from current users of a product or service, including customer testimonials, case studies and online reviews.
- **Wisdom of the crowds social proof:** Proof that highlights popularity or large numbers of users. Perhaps the most well-known example of this is McDonald’s signs we talked about earlier.
- **Wisdom of your friends social proof:** When our peers or friends “like” or approve products or services.

No, you don’t need a celebrity to work with you for social proof, but if there is one willing to take a selfie with you in front of their new home, go for it. If there is someone who has a lot of authority online, even from the local community, having that person post about your service is a great way to gain some credibility, more so if he or she has

get you into the wrong home — and cost you money.

People look to others' experiences and scenarios to make an accurate assessment of what their experience might be like. They may believe what you tell them about your services as an agent, but they are several times more likely to trust unbiased peer reviews. Always make the best of any testimonials or reviews you receive. Showcase them on Instagram, direct mail pieces or anywhere that your potential clients will take note.

Not all clients will leave reviews, though you should [encourage them to do so](#). There are several ways to encourage past clients to provide testimonials.

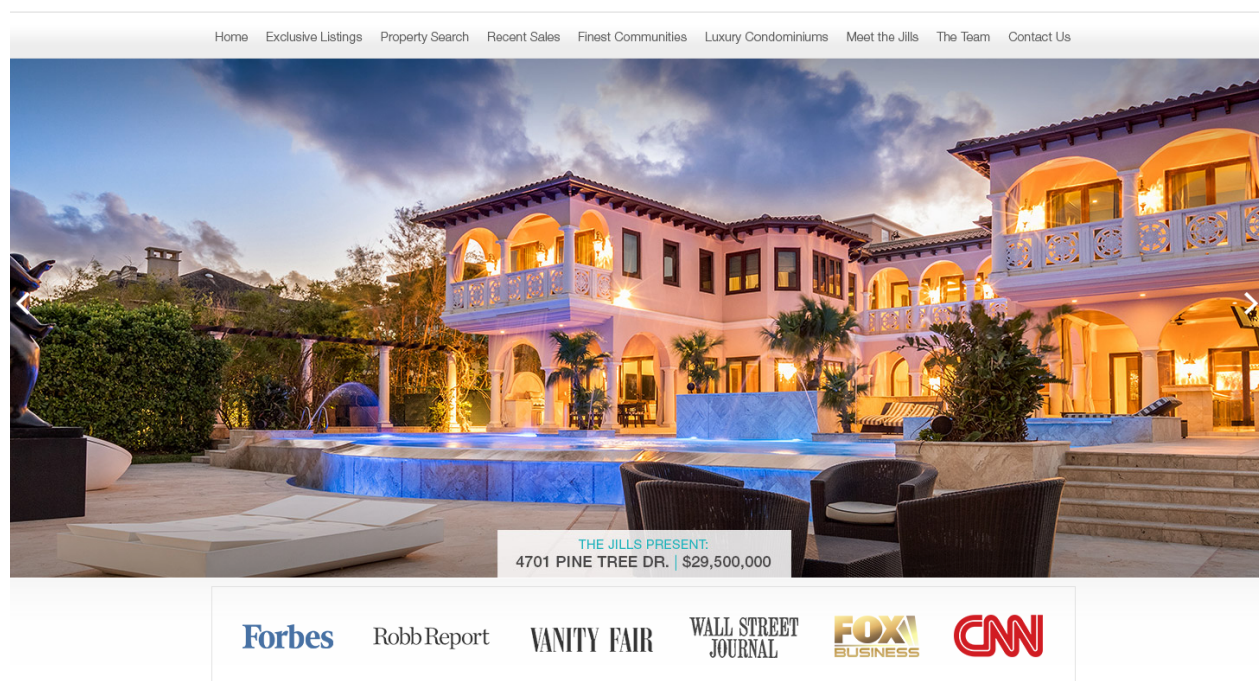
Try to capture videos of past clients. How about a photo of a happy new homeowner with keys in hand in front of a sold sign? Seeing a happy client has a similar effect to reading a testimonial.

## Where have you been?

People love logo blocks that showcase places a brand has been featured or seen. Why? They carry a lot of weight.

*The New York Times* is viewed as an authority, and if one of its journalists covered you, then you must be legit.

Of course, not everything that is featured somewhere is editorial. Many people pay to have a mention in a popular magazine or newspaper, but having the badge on your site will work regardless.



Granted, if you can get a journalist to quote you as an expert, that is even better. Publishers are generally viewed as objective, therefore, if you are being quoted, you must be worth mentioning.

A great way to get quoted or be featured in a news outlet is to [pitch to the media](#) and establish rapport. You can do this by finding out who covers local real estate and offering them suggestions for what might interest their readers.

## Collecting referrals

You've probably already guessed that a [recommendation](#) from a potential client's trusted friend or family member is by far the most powerful form of social proof. In fact, it is the absolute best marketing! Nothing comes close to [word-of-mouth](#), but regrettably, people don't have the best memories.

Although it is the most powerful, it is also the most difficult and time-consuming form of marketing. Turning a past buyer or seller into a brand advocate can present many challenges, one of which is remembering how great your service was considering that buying or selling a home isn't typically a frequent transaction.

[Creating fans](#) who will recommend you to all their family and friends requires not only providing them with a great experience but also about continuing to market to them.

Getting past buyers to remember you and talk about your brand means [keeping them engaged](#) with your social media, emails, content and videos.



check-in on them and get involved with their community. Stay in touch! It's hard work, but the rewards you can reap are tremendous.

## More ideas for leveraging social proof in your business



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If you've been featured in the media, display that on your website and online profiles.

7

Encourage retweets, "likes," shares, comments and any other form of social proof.

8

Showcase awards you have won and recognition you have received.

9

Utilize Facebook advertising such as the "boost post" option on your updates to gain rapid exposure.

10

Collaborate with a complementary business in your industry in administering an active blog.

Every marketing strategy should seek to incorporate social proof as part of the marketing plan. Although the proof may be in the pudding, who will taste the pudding if no one else vouches for it? Your advertising may say you are the no. 1 agent, but few will take your word for it unless you have the social proof to back it up.

Now that you know how to get started, get a plan together on how you are going to capture social proof, and make it part of all your marketing.