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**Market Niches Can Equal Agent Riches: The Long-Tail in Online
Marketing for Realtors**

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The long-tail in online marketing for realtors

In Real Estate, as in much of business, being all things to all people, is an impossible business model to chase.

The Long and Short of It

In Business ['The Long Tail'](#) concept states that you can sell more 'less popular' items than you can of popular items. A common example is that Netflix rents more niche movies than popular ones.

So what does this mean to real estate agents? That you can make a business in marketing niche markets and that it can be often times more profitable.

The #1 real estate related website in the United States is Realtor.com. Knowing the Google keywords people use to find Realtor.com will tell you a lot about online consumer behavior and will give you a lot to think about in your own online lead generation efforts as they relate to niche markets.

The Google keywords used most often to find Realtor.com are "Homes for Sale" and the location in which they are searching.

Why is this? Because people instinctively begin their home buying process by searching properties' to get a sense of the market.

Realtor.com, Trulia, Zillow, Real Estate Companies etc ALL allow online consumers to search for almost all 'Homes for Sale' throughout the country.

So how are most agents trying to generate leads with their websites? By offering a small subset of capabilities and nothing unique or otherwise beneficial to people. In other words, agents are trying to compete with Realtor.com, Trulia, Zillow with the proverbial 'one arm tied behind their back.'

Good luck with that.

Trying to compete head-to-head with a company with millions of dollars to spend on technology and marketing is a losing proposition!!

The Good and The Bad

The Irony is that local real estate agents are in the best position to capitalize on their local market knowledge, but they typically do the worst job at capitalizing this knowledge online.

Local agents know what local buyers and sellers are searching for (in real time! A showing is the most up-to-date search result and one that has immediate feedback capabilities....something rarely accomplished on a computer).

In the world of real estate online lead generation, the most obvious worst offender of this principle are the Real Estate Agents that offer website visitors the ubiquitous "Search the MLS" or "Property Search" as the defining features of their websites. Some of the more cutting edge agents even have "Search by Map" prominently featured as if searching real estate by map was invented yesterday. It wasn't and pretty much EVERY website offers it.

In other words agents are trying to compete with Realtor.com and all the other real estate websites by offering infinitely less data and capabilities.

How is that working for you?

Offering people and online consumers 'the same but less' is not a sustainable business model.

Grab the market by The Long Tail

Agents should focus their efforts on niches so that

- a) They have a better chance of being found and noticed
- b) That they have a better chance at being relevant to some people (a market) vs. not relevant to anyone (the market).

And this has important implications in all your online marketing as well.

"Search Homes for Sale" / "Property Search"

99.9% of agents allow online consumers to search for 'Homes for Sale' with the main segmentation being "My Listings" sometimes euphemistically entitled "Featured Listings."

To the online consumer this looks and feels like 'every other agent and website' on the Internet. When the people start thinking you are like 'everyone else on the Internet' that is not a good thing. In addition, they can go to one of over dozens of real estate websites and not only search every location in the country, they can typically do a lot of analytics that your agent website does not come close to offering. You are trying to compete with websites that have millions of dollars to spend in marketing and advertising.

Create a Niche -> Market the Niche -> Get Found -> Get Results

Local Real Estate Agents work in defined geographical areas. In every agent's 'area' there are geographical submarkets and property submarkets.

What geographical submarkets or particular property types are in your market that you know people buy and sell?

Identify some market niches, and then using either your MLS or website IDX provider's tools, create and save predefined property searches that return just those properties when clicked on as a link. In other words, give people what they want. You certainly know your market better than a corporate website out of New York, San Francisco or wherever it is that corporate is based!

A great example of this is Dave & Suzy Cardwell's pre-defined property search for [Crow Canyon Country Club](#) in the San Ramon Valley area of Northern California. While most all other agents in their area show "Search the MLS" (which Dave & Suzy have as well), they allow online consumers to One Click Search several key niche markets that they know people buying in their area are interested in (technology provider [AgentAchieve](#)).

Property Subtypes are also a great niche to market and let people One Click Search. Rick Miner, in Seattle markets several property niches such as [Waterfront and View Homes](#) at his website (Northwest MLS IDX, member of [Michael Russer Online Domminace](#)).

Easier, Faster and More Relevant is Always Better

Put yourself in the online consumers shoes. Let's imagine 'you' are interested in buying a property in Crow Canyon Country Club. Are you more likely to click on a link for Crow Canyon Country Club or Search the MLS? Or that you are interested in Waterfront or View Homes of Seattle....would you more likely click on Waterfront and View Homes or Property Search?

The beautiful thing about allowing people to One Click Search niche markets is, is that on the one hand you are giving people that want this information the information they want upfront, fast and easy. And secondly, you are not turning off 'everyone else' who just wants to search your general MLS listings.

If people have to search your website or click too much to 'hopefully get' what they are looking for, then you are going to lose a lot of lead generation opportunities.

Market the Niche -> Get Found

There are many places that you can insert live links to predefined searches for the niche markets in your area. Some of the best include:

1. Your website (but how do they find your website?)
2. Your online marketing including Craig's List and your eFlyers
3. Your email signature

Once people know that they can quickly and easily find what they are looking for (i.e. the properties that interest them the most) they are more likely to stick around to look at what else you have to say which only further increases your online lead generation possibilities.

Look for our next article discussing Website Content.

This article was inspired by my experiences as the Director of Online Marketing at People & Properties Sotheby's International Realty, my work with clients as the founder of [Listings-to-Leads](#) and Maureen Plainfield's post "[Passings on from the KW Tech Alliance](#)" discussing the Long Tail Approach to internet marketing and Chris Anderson's article in Wired Magazine "[The Long Tail](#)".

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