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Part Three of a Three-Part Series

The Real Estate Agent's Guide to Social Media

How to JOIN the twitter

Cocktail Party!

By Matt Dollinger, Performance Coach, @properties

This third and final segment of “Your First 90 Days in Social Media,” is focused on pulling together all the different elements we have previously outlined to construct an authentic and effective social media campaign. Here’s an overview of what we’ve identified so far.



Microblogging – (definition via Wikipedia) is a form of multimedia blogging (such as Twitter) which allows users to send brief text, photos, video or audio clips and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging, email, digital audio or the web.

Twitter – I Just Don't Get It

Oprah's on it. Ashton owns it. And every day Twitter grows at an exponential rate, greater than that of Facebook and MySpace combined. It has become an instrumental part of the entire "Lifestreaming" movement, where individuals share their thoughts, innovation and day-to-day happenings through this simple service. It allows users to incorporate pictures, hyperlinks, and even video to their text while limiting their "Tweets" to a short 140-character message.

The biggest differentiator between Twitter and other platforms is its ability to capture "What's going on?" in real time via its mobile applications. This was demonstrated during the Iranian Elections this year which allowed for "on the ground" reporting of real-time events from individuals actually partaking in the event first hand. *The Washington Post* even reported on this in the article "Twitter Is a Player In Iran's Drama."

The most common question I hear from individuals that try out Twitter is, "I don't GET Twitter? Why would anyone want to know what I'm doing all day?" Here is one of my favorite quotes to help understand what Twitter's all about, and makes it a little easier to "get" for business purposes.

Twitter, in essence, allows you to attend a great big cocktail party filled with diverse and (typically) civilized chatter. Some of what you hear and say will be frivolous. But the chatter will also provoke, inform, and engage you in a way, and at a volume, you can't replicate offline.

– courtesy of Jack and Suzy Welch, *BusinessWeek*, "Why We Tweet"

An Online 24/7 Cocktail Party... and EVERYONE is Invited

Imagine, if you will, the ability to have a 24/7 conversation with people that you feel are the most interesting people in the world, that continues like a timeline, even when you're not participating.

You have the ability to read where they're going, why, what they're reading, what they think of it, why they found it interesting, and most importantly, share thoughts and opinions back and forth on particular topics. Like a cocktail party, as soon as that conversation becomes boring or trite, you have the ability to walk away, join another conversation, or leave altogether, (without the cheesy excuses!)

What truly makes Twitter an engaging platform is the integration of multimedia into the conversation. This allows readers to see pictures, locations, videos, and access hyperlinks to articles, blog posts and more to complete their engagement. Now, instead of saying, "I'm having breakfast," one has the ability to say, "I'm having the chorizo omelet (insert picture) for breakfast, at Toast on Damen (location) great reviews (link to Zagat)."

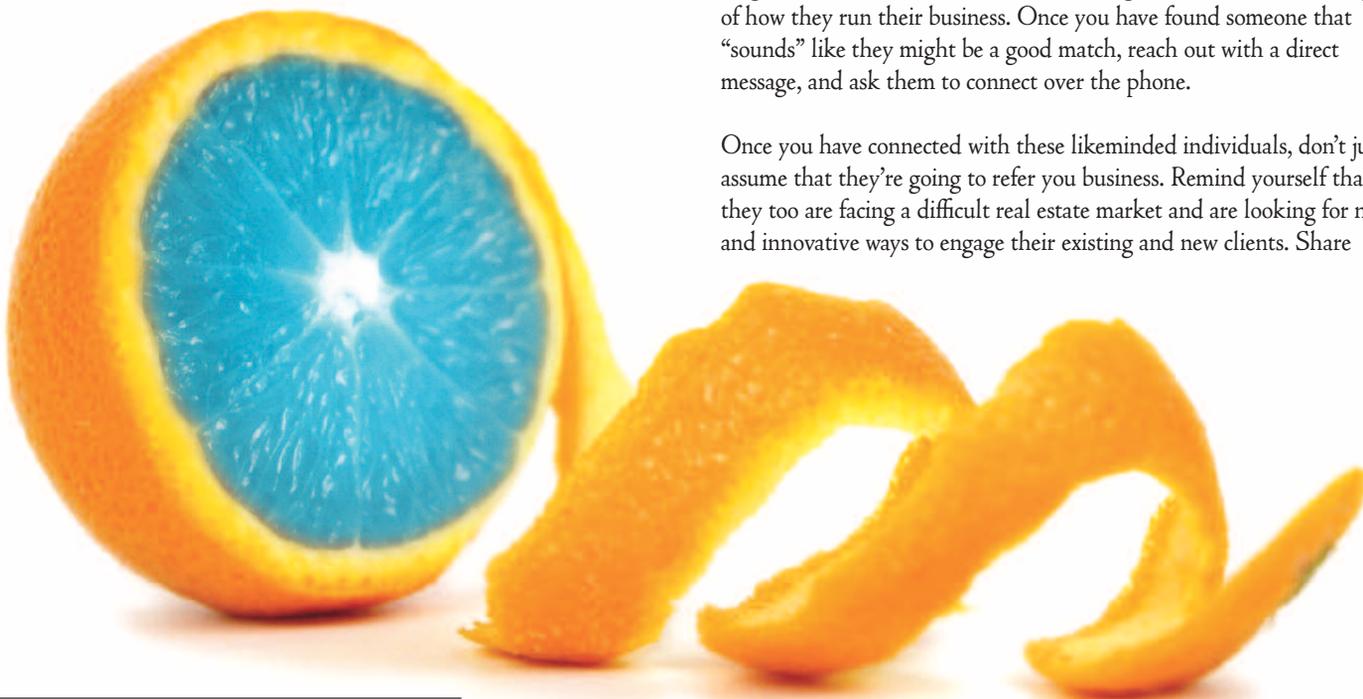
I feel there are three major uses for Twitter in the Real Estate Community.

1. Expand your real estate referral network
2. Broadcast your personal brand as an expert by sharing your knowledge
3. Learn from others within and outside the industry

Expanding your Real Estate Referral Network

In today's market of lessened transactions, expanding your referral network (outside your areas of expertise) is something incredibly important. Twitter makes it very easy to not only find, but get to know and engage, other real estate professionals across the nation (and even internationally). Their profiles usually include their e-mail addresses, blogs and Web sites that also allow you to get a better understanding of how they run their business. Once you have found someone that "sounds" like they might be a good match, reach out with a direct message, and ask them to connect over the phone.

Once you have connected with these likeminded individuals, don't just assume that they're going to refer you business. Remind yourself that they too are facing a difficult real estate market and are looking for new and innovative ways to engage their existing and new clients. Share



informative articles, new marketing techniques that have worked for you, and any other insight you might have to encourage their business. This will allow you to “stand out” as more than just a REALTOR® in another area, but a business advocate that shares their “biz love” and insight.

Broadcast your Personal Brand as an Expert... Not Just a Real Estate Expert

Here’s the hardest thing for people in our industry to understand... people aren’t going on twitter to buy real estate! It’s true. However, there are home buyers and potential sellers on Twitter. The key is engagement. This isn’t a quick sale, and people will shy away from you faster than a greasy salesman at a used car lot. Provide professional insight, great articles, review things you enjoy, personal insight on neighborhoods/events, and most of all **BE HUMAN.**

Twitter gives you a podium with a very large audience and everything you say should reflect the brand that you possess both personally and professionally. Even more important than broadcasting messages is listening to what individuals are talking about and adjusting your message accordingly. If people are asking about market conditions in Bucktown... give it to them. If people are asking about restaurant recommendations in Lincoln Square... provide your favorites. Remember that this entire online network revolves around engagement. Come across as a salesy-spammer and they will blacklist you before you have a chance to redeem yourself.

Learning from your Online Network

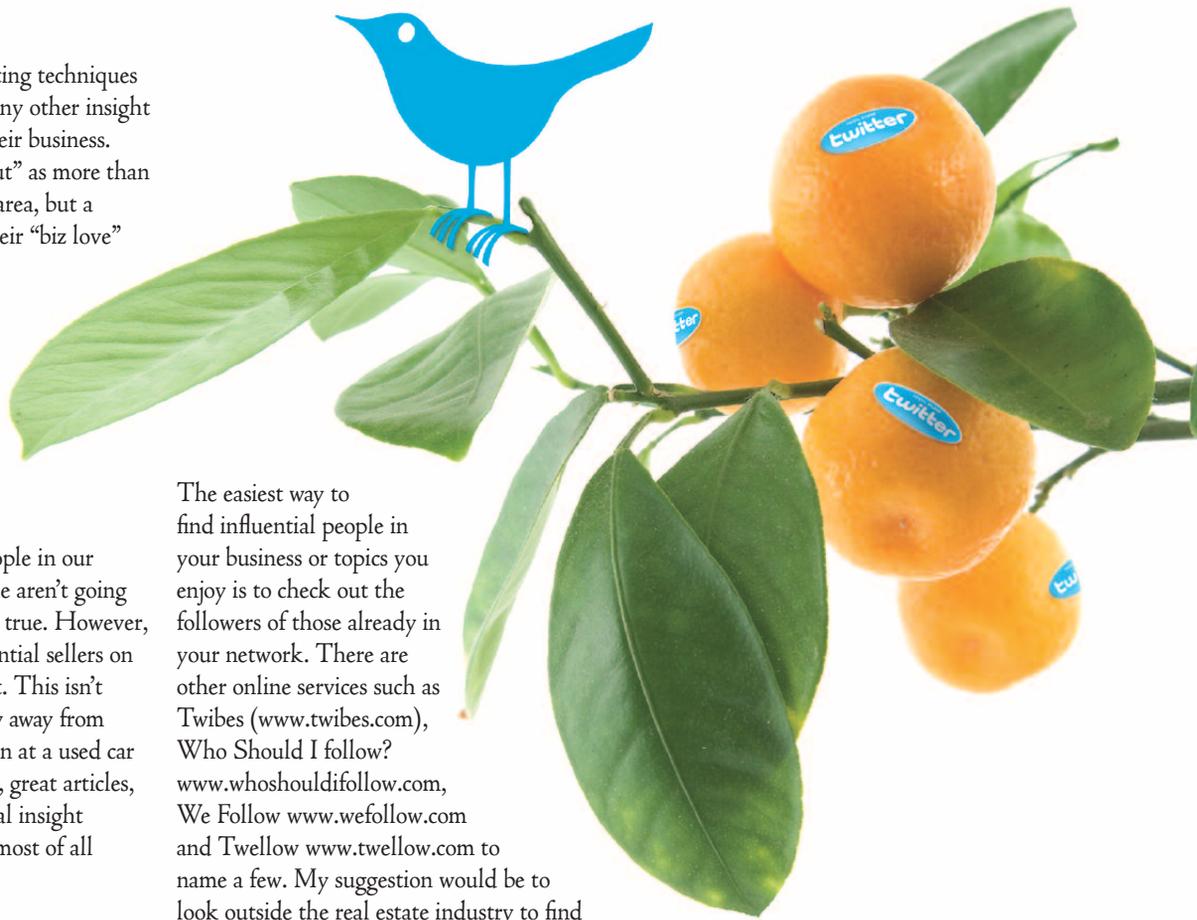
Tim Sanders, www.timsanders.com, a nationally known speaker and author, is someone I adamantly admire. On Twitter he’s known as @sanderssays. I have the ability to follow Tim, see what he’s reading (by links that he shares), see where he’s speaking (by locations he tweets) and even engage him in conversations on topics we find interesting. Tim was even kind enough to point me in the right direction when I was stuck on a presentation the other day.

The easiest way to find influential people in your business or topics you enjoy is to check out the followers of those already in your network. There are other online services such as Twibes (www.twibes.com), Who Should I follow? www.whoshouldifollow.com, We Follow www.wefollow.com and Twellow www.twellow.com to name a few. My suggestion would be to look outside the real estate industry to find those that are truly groundbreaking and innovative in business today. A couple of my personal recommendations are @1000wattmarc, @armano, @peterkim, and @gregverdino.

Twitter gives me the ability to have meaningful, educational interaction with many individuals that I might not have the opportunity to engage otherwise. Some of the smartest people in business today are on Twitter and frequently (if not daily – hourly), share their intellect with the world. It truly is the cocktail party of the century... and you’re invited. **CR**



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