



# SOCIAL MEDIA FOR REALTORS: **101 DOS** **AND DON'TS**



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF REALTORS®

*The Voice for Real Estate®*

**GETTING STARTED IN SOCIAL MEDIA CAN SEEM LIKE AN OVERWHELMING TASK WHEN YOU ARE ALREADY BUSY WITH 500 EMAILS A DAY, CLIENT PHONE CALLS, AND MULTIPLE LISTING PRESENTATIONS. HOWEVER, INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA INTO YOUR BUSINESS CAN BE A VALUABLE TOOL. IT ALLOWS YOU TO:**

- ◆ EXPAND YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE
- ◆ GENERATE LEADS
- ◆ MAKE CONNECTIONS
- ◆ IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS
- ◆ BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
- ◆ GAIN REFERRALS



According to the 2009 REALTOR® Technology Report, 84 percent of REALTORS® are using social media, primarily to engage with consumers and other REALTORS®. Seventy-eight percent of REALTORS® are on Facebook and 58 percent are on LinkedIn. On a daily basis, 36 percent of real estate professionals use Facebook, followed by 13 percent who use Twitter and 7 percent who use LinkedIn. And, 18 percent of real estate professionals say they use LinkedIn weekly.

The use of social networking sites by REALTORS® and consumers is growing, and it is time you start using them too! These 101 tips will help you get started and on your way to understanding and utilizing social media like a pro. Use these tips to get you on the right track and help you stand apart from the competition.

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#### **IN THIS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE YOU'LL FIND SECTIONS ON:**

- Social Networking and the Connection with Real Estate
- General Social Media Tips

#### **THEN WE'LL DELVE INTO SPECIFIC TIPS FOR THE THREE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES:**

- Facebook (Your Little Black Book or Reunion)
- Twitter (The Online Cocktail Party)
- LinkedIn Tips (Your online Rolodex and Resume)

#### **THROUGHOUT THIS GUIDE WE'VE BROKEN DOWN THE TIPS INTO TWO SECTIONS:**

- Principles and Best Practices (Best practices and theory)
- Getting It Done (Action items and putting theory into practice)

We'll end by wrapping it up and provide additional resources and next steps.

# SOCIAL NETWORKING AND THE CONNECTION WITH REAL ESTATE

Your family, friends, and business connections are using many different social websites to locate and share content. Some are reviewing articles, uploading photos and videos, or writing blogs. Here are details about some of the most popular online social networks in the real estate realm.

## GENERAL SOCIAL NETWORKS

### **FACEBOOK**

Allows users to post online profiles (including photos, information about themselves, etc.) and then connect to other users who share the same interests, experiences, etc. Facebook is built around “friends” and groups. It includes many networks of companies, regions, high schools, and colleges.



### **TWITTER**

A microblog that allows you to post messages 140 characters long. Every time you post a message, everyone who “follows” you receives it, either on Twitter.com, on their cell phone, or via one of many Twitter reader tools. Twitter posts can include hyperlinks to blog posts or Web pages, which encourages people to engage with you. In addition, people can share (or “retweet”) your Twitter posts, expanding their reach. Find people in your community and start reaching out.



### **LINKEDIN**

A professional network. Build a network of past colleagues, friends, and industry experts. The Answers section helps you build a reputation as an industry expert by answering questions that others ask. Ask people to write recommendations of your work and endorse you. And consider joining the National Association of REALTORS® group on LinkedIn to network and share ideas with other REALTORS®.



### **PLAXO PULSE**

A public profile that is constantly updated with the content that you are creating all over the Web. You have refined control of the content and information you include in your profile. The result is that you have control and portability of your public identity.



## REAL ESTATE SOCIAL NETWORKS

### ACTIVERAIN

A social network for real estate professionals that offers networking and referral building. The blogging platform has tools to allow even the newest of real estate professionals to be found on the Internet.



### REALTOWN

One of the oldest and most respected real estate networks, featuring a variety of online communities as well as a wealth of community created content.

### BROKERAGENTSOCIAL

A peer-to-peer community open to real estate professionals of all types: real estate sales, mortgage, title, and all those who provide support to the real estate industry.

## REAL ESTATE SEARCH

There are many real estate search engines to choose from. These sites allow real estate professionals to market their listings, view real estate data, and promote their services. Some offer profiles and blogs. The most popular are:

- Realtor.com
- Trulia.com
- Zillow.com
- Roost.com
- Frontdoor.com
- Creativeroof.com

## BLOGS

A blog is a website where you add content on an ongoing basis. New posts end up at the top of the blog so people can scan and see your posts by dates. A blog is a great resource for a real estate professional. Find a publisher so you can start a blog – Wordpress.org is free and has hundreds of themes and plug-ins. Many website hosting plans make it easy to add a Wordpress blog to an existing website. Realtor.com has a free “Featured Blog” go to the “For Realtors” section to find out more about it.



## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

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### **FLICKR:**

A storage place for photos, as well as a social network. If you use Flickr, you will meet people looking for great local pictures and people finding your photos. Flickr has a great interface that lets you also post photos to your blogs.



### **PICASA:**

A free photo organization and editing tool from Google,. For a free program, it really has a lot to offer. Picasa is desktop software that runs on Windows; it can be downloaded from <http://picasa.google.com/>.



### **YOUTUBE:**

A video-based social network. If people do online searches for your communities or town, they are likely to see your videos, and they may contact you from there.



# SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW

Web 2.0 is changing our industry as the Web becomes a platform. According to Wikipedia, "The term 'Web 2.0' is commonly associated with web applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web."

Web 2.0 is not a software or a hardware, but the ability for anyone to create content on the Web to communicate with their niche. An example of social media in practice is that you can become a source who recommends products and services that solve problems. Some of the tools that can help you provide this information depend on your comfort level and willingness to use the tools.



You'll find that a number of the dos and don'ts have a TechByte logo on them. You can find out more about these tips at [www.TheTechByte.com/101Topics](http://www.TheTechByte.com/101Topics). These tips are meant to provide you a general start for all social networks and media.

## SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW-PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

- 1. DO** Take NAR's e-PRO® Technology Certification Program and NAR's Web 2.0 and Social Media Course [www.eProNAR.com](http://www.eProNAR.com).
- 2. DO** Get yourself out there and join the networking sites that will help you expand your sphere of influence.
- 3. DO** Promote yourself and your business but DON'T overdo it. DO let readers know you are a real estate professional but DON'T do it by broadcasting listings/sales. People want to know you as a person, not just by your profession.
- 4. DO** Remember that the Code of Ethics principles still apply online.
- 5. DO** Realize that the ROI (return on investment) of social media can be slow, and it may take some time before you see a return for the time you put into connecting online.
- 6. DO** Realize that social networking isn't for everyone. Explore several social media sites and choose one to focus on making a presence in.
- 7. DO** Remember that you want to be where your current and prospective clients are. Make it easy for people to find you.
- 8. DO** Manage your social media efforts yourself, so you are completely aware and in touch with what is going on with your pages, profiles, blogs, and sites.

- 9. DO** Set up Google Alerts to monitor your reputation (your name, brand, user names) and area (where you sell real estate, your farm areas).

is working for them, read about it and use it!

- 11. DO** Make timely posts. Focus on the season, your target market, and the local economic environment.
- 12. DO** Use free blogging tools. You can get started with a free Featured Blog from REALTOR.com, or you can choose to use a service like Blogger <[www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)> or Wordpress <[www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org)>.
- 13. DO** Write compelling headlines for your blog posts, so you catch the attention of potential buyers or sellers. You can extend the value and reach of blog posts by using the headline as your Facebook or LinkedIn status update or post as a tweet on Twitter.
- 14. DO** Consider integrating social media with the tools that are currently working for you (print, postcards, newsletters, etc).
- 15. DO** Make sure you have a website or blog and that people can find your website when they search for real estate in your community. Your website remains the foundation for your business – your social media endeavors should always direct people back to your site.
- 16. DO** Start a blog. On your blog, write posts about your properties and about your particular skill set. Promote your blog posts on other social media sites like Twitter and Facebook.
- 17. DO** Give your profile pizzazz by using your “elevator speech” for your profile and description. An elevator speech is the 10-second description of yourself that you would use in an interview.
- 18. DO** Go mobile. Use your smart phone to maximize your time on social media. For example, while in line at the grocery store you can update your Facebook status, accomplishing your social media goals without taking up too much of your valuable time.
- 19. DO** Let people know you are online. Add your social media profile information to your website, email signature, business card, flyers, etc.
- 20. DO** Get an html “badge” and use it on your website, blog, and email to let people know you are connected.
- 21. DO** Consider outsourcing areas in which you aren’t particularly skilled. Be careful,



though: If a conversation with your name on it is written by someone else, it may be noticeable that it's not really you writing the posts.

- 22. DO** Include keywords that a client might search for in your blog and social media posts.
- 23. DO** Edit your profile and security settings, particularly on Facebook. The lines between business and personal have become blurred. You can reveal as much or as little about yourself as you wish.
- 24. DO** Give careful consideration to exactly who sees your profile and when. Create a limited Facebook profile for those people you are unsure about whether to include. By default, your limited profile contains everything in your full profile, so take the time to edit it down.
- 25. DO** Create personalized profiles/bios on each site, making each similar but not duplicated. LinkedIn is more businesslike, while Twitter and Facebook are more casual.
- 26. DO** Hire out some of your Web efforts. To save time, hire out the design, coding, and back end work on your website.
- 27. DON'T** Replace money-generating activities with social media activities. Spend time on social media when you would otherwise not be making money.
- 28. DON'T** Make it a one-way conversation. Interact with other people and areas of interest online. Make it a two-way conversation by showing interest and engaging with others.
- 29. DON'T** Keep it too simple. Don't describe yourself in simple terms by only telling your friends and followers that "I'm a real estate agent."



## SOCIAL MEDIA OVERVIEW-GETTING IT DONE

30. **DO** Start with the three largest networks: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
31. **DO** Commit the time to developing yourself and your social media tools. Focus your attention on social media for at least 6 to 12 months to see results.
32. **DO** Set goals for what you want to get from your social media efforts, figure out why you are doing this and what is realistic.
33. **DO** Go local and connect with people you have things in common with.
34. **DO** Watch how other real estate professionals are using social media by reading their blogs, and connection with them on social networks.
35. **DO** Use social media consolidating tools like [www.ubertwitter.com](http://www.ubertwitter.com), [www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com), and Facebook for your phone.
36. **DO** Post about things your clients are asking you about. If one client asks you about a particular topic, someone else probably has the same question.
37. **DO** Be compelling. Make sure your posts are worth reading and will grab your audience's attention.
38. **DO** Set aside time in your busy schedule to dedicate to using the social media tools.
39. **DON'T** Give up on social media tools after only a short period of time. It will take time to develop your network and the real value in these tools.
40. **DON'T** Write overly complicated blog or social media posts. Keep your posts short and to the point.

41. **DO** Import your contact lists into Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter so you can connect with our sphere.

**theTECHbyte**

Inspire | train | implement

# FACEBOOK

## (YOUR LITTLE BLACK BOOK OR REUNION)



Facebook has more than 350 million active viewers, with 65 million of them using mobile technology to visit the network. With about 50 percent of users logging in daily, more than 8 billion minutes are collectively spent on Facebook each day. The average user on Facebook has 130 friends, and the fastest-growing demographic of Facebook is those 35 years and older. In NAR's 2009 social media survey of members, Facebook was the most used social network among respondents.

### **FACEBOOK-PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES**

- 42. DO** Keep in mind that Facebook's Terms of Service states, "You will not use your personal profile for your own commercial gain." For commercial purposes, create a fan page rather than only a personal Facebook profile.
- 43. DO** Treat your Facebook page as a conversation. Respond to all feedback whether positive, negative, or difficult.
- 44. DO** Share your life and experiences. This is an opportunity to be social and share your interests. Adding personal items to your pages like photos of your family and pets allows current and prospective customers to learn more about who you are and engage with your interests and personality.
- 45. DO** Socialize. Be on Facebook for the reason people are there. People are there to socialize, so you should do the same.
- 46. DO** Use technology like your smartphone to multitask with social media. Log in to Twitter and Facebook on your phone to stay connected.
- 47. DO** Make personal connections on social media sites. The sales will come later.
- 48. DON'T** Go on to Facebook with a singular goal of selling. This will be looked at negatively and set you up for failure.
- 49. DON'T** Write only about real estate. This will only cause people to be put off.
- 50. DON'T** Outright ask for business on Facebook. You can offer services if people are looking but don't go over the top.
- 51. DON'T** Force your conversations. If you aren't interested, don't fake it. People will know when you aren't authentic.

## FACEBOOK-GETTING IT DONE

52. **DO** Find groups and/or pages that your target market would be interested in, and become a fan of those pages.
53. **DO** Use Facebook as a lead generating tool.
54. **DO** Make yourself known by updating your status and staying engaged in discussions.
55. **DO** Get personal. A good formula for real estate professionals on Facebook is: two parts personal and one part business.
56. **DO** Use content you find interesting. Don't recreate the wheel with your posts. Link to interesting stories; try to post good and relevant content daily.
57. **DO** Use Facebook to search "Posts by everyone" for brand keywords in users' (with open privacy settings) statuses.
58. **DO** Comment on what others post on Facebook. Spend five minutes of your Facebook time each day to comment on what some of your friends or fans have said. Stay involved.

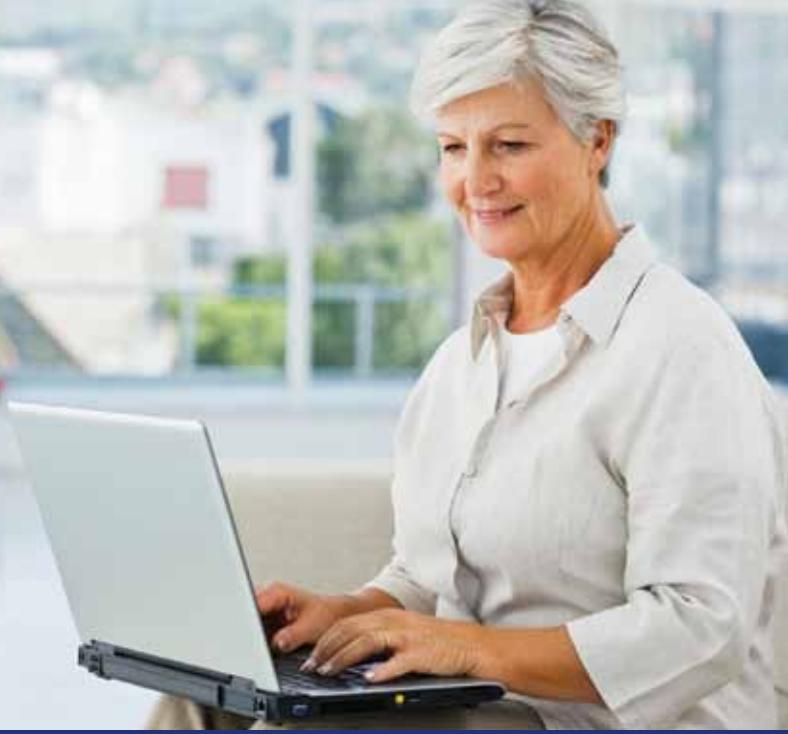
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59. **DO** Organize your friends into lists so you can manage easier.
60. **DO** Use content that consumers will find interesting. HouseLogic [www.houselogic.com](http://www.houselogic.com) has a free tool – the REALTORS® Content Resource [www.houselogic.com/members](http://www.houselogic.com/members) – that REALTORS® can use to publish content to consumers on the topics that mean the most to them.

61. **DO** Convert customers into Facebook fans by asking customers to be a fan of your company on Facebook. By converting customers into Facebook fans, you are immediately spreading your message beyond your own network.





- 62. DO** Start a fan page for your community or neighborhood, in addition to one for yourself or your business. Be the host of a page that people want to go to.
- 63. DO** Become a fan of chapters and/or organizations in your area. This will allow you to connect with people in your area.
- 64. DO** Interact with people. Expand your sphere of influence and get to know people. Comment on people's status updates and/or pictures.
- 65. DO** Gain referrals. Even though this is a social network, if someone in your network posts that they are looking for a new house, be sure to offer your services and/or your listings by getting and offering referrals.
- 66. DON'T** Send out mass friend requests or 'friend' someone you don't know. For everyone you do know and want to add as a friend, send a personal message with a bit of information about how they know you.

# TWITTER (THE ONLINE COCKTAIL PARTY)



According to the Twitter home page, “Twitter is a free service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages.”

People write short updates, often called “tweets” of 140 characters or fewer. These messages are posted to your profile or your blog, sent to your followers, and are searchable on Twitter search.”

## TWITTER-PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

67. **DO** Use Twitter to stay informed about the latest market relevant information by following real estate newsmakers. Use Twitter as the pulse of what is going on in your area.
68. **DO** Engage your followers. Ask your followers to participate in conversation by posing questions and asking for advice.
69. **DO** Retweet interesting and/or valuable information. This is just as good as creating your own content online.
70. **DO** Keep it personal with a picture. Let people see who you are by personalizing your profile pictures. Many people will not follow someone without a picture and/or avatar.
71. **DO** Reply to tweets. This engagement will potentially open you up to a greater audience.
72. **DON'T** Be passive. Twitter is constantly changing and moving. Stay attuned to what is going on and evolve with it.
73. **DON'T** Overdo the amount of your participation, or the amount of selling you do in your Twitter posts. Keep your tweets subtle and don't over promote yourself or your business.
74. **DON'T** Overuse links on Twitter and constantly direct your followers somewhere else.
75. **DON'T** Feel like you have to start conversations. It's okay to eavesdrop on Twitter - join in!
76. **DON'T** Spend all your time on Twitter talking about your open house and listings.



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77. **DO** Focus on keeping posts short. With only 140 characters, you'll need to learn how to say more with less.



## TWITTER-GETTING IT DONE

78. **DO** Follow people who have many followers and similar interests. If you want followers, you have to be a follower.
79. **DO** Manage your Twitter account using a tool like TweetDeck <[www\(tweetdeck.com\)](http://www(tweetdeck.com))> to stay on top of your Twitter activity. TweetDeck allows you to stay connected with your contacts across Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, and more.
80. **DO** Shorten the URLs to Web pages that you mention in tweets, in order to maximize the information in your tweets. Use a service like <http://bit.ly/> or Bud URL <[www.budurl.com](http://www.budurl.com)>, which also lets you track who has clicked on the link from Twitter.
81. **DO** Provide an interesting teaser to any URL you use in a tweet so that it gives your followers a reason to click on the link.
82. **DO** Search key words to find followers. Use the search function in Twitter to find people to follow by searching for key words related to your business like “real estate,” “commercial real estate,” etc.
83. **DO** Respond to try to respond to messages you receive as well as any mentions, though know that you DON’T have to respond to everything.
84. **DO** Post pictures. Keep your followers engaged in what you are saying by adding pictures. Use a service like TwitPic <[www.twitpic.com](http://www.twitpic.com)>.
85. **DO** Check in. Use a service like Foursquare <[www.foursquare.com](http://www.foursquare.com)>. People use Foursquare to “check in”, which is a way of telling others about your whereabouts. When you check in someplace, the service tells your friends where they can find you and recommend places to go and things to do, and also provides a way to know who is nearby.
86. **DO** Create lists of your followers. It will make it easier to organize everyone.
87. **DO** Manage your account on the go using tools like UberTwitter <[www.ubertwitter.com](http://www.ubertwitter.com)> and Tweetie [www.tweetie.com](http://www.tweetie.com).
88. **DON’T** Link alone. Don’t only use a URL as your tweet – describe the link you are posting.

**the TECHbyte**  
inspire | train | implement  
build | coach | lead

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89. **DO** Use hashtags to identify your tweets about a popular topic, event, etc.. Hashtags are a community-driven convention for adding additional context and metadata to your tweets. You create a hashtag simply by prefixing a word with a number sign: #hashtag. Start using hashtags in your tweets, preceding key words. It can be helpful to do a little research first, to find out if the subject you’re tweeting already has an established hashtag.

# LINKEDIN

## (YOUR ONLINE ROLODEX AND RESUME)



According to LinkedIn, LinkedIn “is an interconnected network of experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries and 200 countries. You can find, be introduced to, and collaborate with qualified professionals that you need to work with to accomplish your goals.”

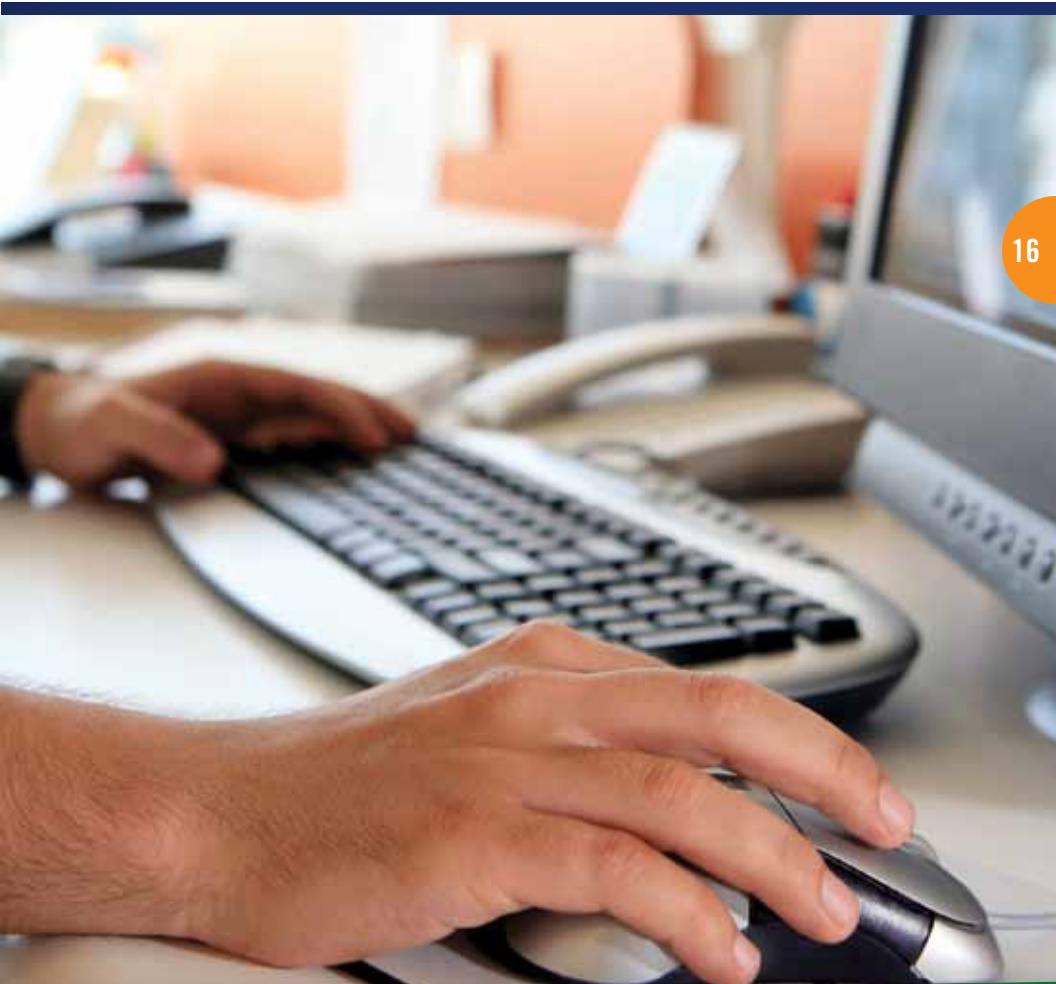
### LINKEDIN-PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

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- 90. DO** Use LinkedIn as your networking site to ask for business and ask for real estate referrals.
- 91. DO** Lean more towards a professional/business side versus personal/casual on LinkedIn.
- 92. DO** Use a professional picture for your avatar.
- 93. DO** Set up your profile as your online resume. List what type of homes you sell, and how you can be of benefit to people.
- 94. DO** Grow your sphere of influence by making as many connections as possible with people you know. DO add a personal message with each request for a connection. The canned message often gets skipped over – change it! Remind the person how you know them.
- 95. DO** Consider LinkedIn as your online resume. Focus on getting recommendations from past clients.
- 96. DO** Ask your connections to help you make connections that might help your business grow.
- 97. DON'T** Connect with people on LinkedIn that you don't know.



## LINKEDIN-GETTING IT DONE

- 98. DO** Join groups such as chambers of commerce and local clubs in your area.
- 99. DO** Recommend people you work with in order to generate recommendations for yourself. Ask for recommendations. If you have worked well with someone, ask them to recommend your work.
- 100. DO** Use your network to make referrals and ask for referrals in return.
- 101. DO** Participate in “LinkedIn Answers.” You can position yourself as an expert to answer questions about real estate or recommend connections who can help.



# WRAPPING IT UP

The tips provided will get you started using social media tools, but remember social media is constantly changing and evolving. You will need to constantly change and evolve to stay on top of what is going on. Remember that if you put in some time and make an effort, you will start to see the return you are looking for. Here are additional resources that may be helpful:

- FOURSQUARE** <[www.foursquare.com](http://www.foursquare.com)>
- UBERTWITTER** <[www.ubertwitter.com](http://www.ubertwitter.com)>
- TWEETIE** <[www.tweetie.com](http://www.tweetie.com)>
- TWEETDECK** <[www\(tweetdeck.com](http://www(tweetdeck.com)>
- TWITPIC** <[www.twitpic.com](http://www.twitpic.com)>
- PICASSA** <[picasa.google.com](http://picasa.google.com)>
- FLICKR** <[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)>
- TECHBYTE DOS AND DON'TS BY TRAINER AMY CHOREW (VIDEOS AND FURTHER INFORMATION)** <[www.TheTechByte.com/101Topics](http://www.TheTechByte.com/101Topics)>
- FEEDBURNER (RSS FEEDS)** <[www.feedburner.com](http://www.feedburner.com)>
- TWITTER FOR BUSINESS GUIDE** <[business.twitter.com/twitter101](http://business.twitter.com/twitter101)>
- LINKEDIN ANSWERS** <[www.linkedin.com/answers?trk=hb\\_ft\\_answers](http://www.linkedin.com/answers?trk=hb_ft_answers)>
- REALTOR.COM FEATURED BLOG**  
<[solutioncenter.realtor.com/Agents/FeaturedBlog.aspx](http://solutioncenter.realtor.com/Agents/FeaturedBlog.aspx)>
- WORDPRESS** <[www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org)>
- HOUSELOGIC REALTOR® CONTENT RESOURCE**  
<[www.houselogic.com/members](http://www.houselogic.com/members)>
- GOOGLE ALERTS** <[www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)>
- FACEBOOK SECURITY SETTINGS**  
<[www.facebook.com/privacy/?view=limits - /privacy/](http://www.facebook.com/privacy/?view=limits - /privacy/)>view=profile>
- LINKEDIN SECURITY SETTINGS**  
<[www.linkedin.com/secure/settings?trk=hb\\_acc](http://www.linkedin.com/secure/settings?trk=hb_acc)>
- BIT.LY HTTP://BIT.LY/ OR BUD URL** <[www.budurl.com](http://www.budurl.com)>
- NAR'S e-PRO® TECHNOLOGY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM AND NAR'S WEB 2.0 AND SOCIAL MEDIA COURSE** <[www.eProNAR.com](http://www.eProNAR.com)>
- THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®' SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES AND PRENCESSES**  
<[www.realtor.org/about\\_nar/social\\_media](http://www.realtor.org/about_nar/social_media)>
- FIELD GUIDE TO SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR REALTORS®**  
<[www.realtor.org/library/library/fg125](http://www.realtor.org/library/library/fg125)>
- FIELD GUIDE TO TWITTER** <[www.realtor.org/library/library/fg234](http://www.realtor.org/library/library/fg234)>

# NOTES

**Getting started in social media can seem like an overwhelming task when you are already busy with 500 emails a day, client phone calls, and multiple listing presentations. However, integrating social media into your business can be a valuable tool. It allows you to:**

- Expand your sphere of influence
- Generate leads
- Make connections
- Improve your business
- Build relationships
- Gain referrals

**In this quick reference guide you'll find sections on:**

- Social Networking and the Connection with Real Estate
- General Social Media Tips

**You'll then delve into specific tips for the three most popular social networking sites:**

- Facebook (Your Little Black Book or Reunion)
- Twitter (The Online Cocktail Party)
- LinkedIn Tips (Your online Rolodex and Resume)

**This an easy-to-understand tool that will help real estate professionals like you take your business to the next level using the power of online social media tools, saving you time, money, and effort by getting started with key dos and don'ts.**

