



EBOOK

Real Estate Agency Websites

What You Need To Know in 2021+

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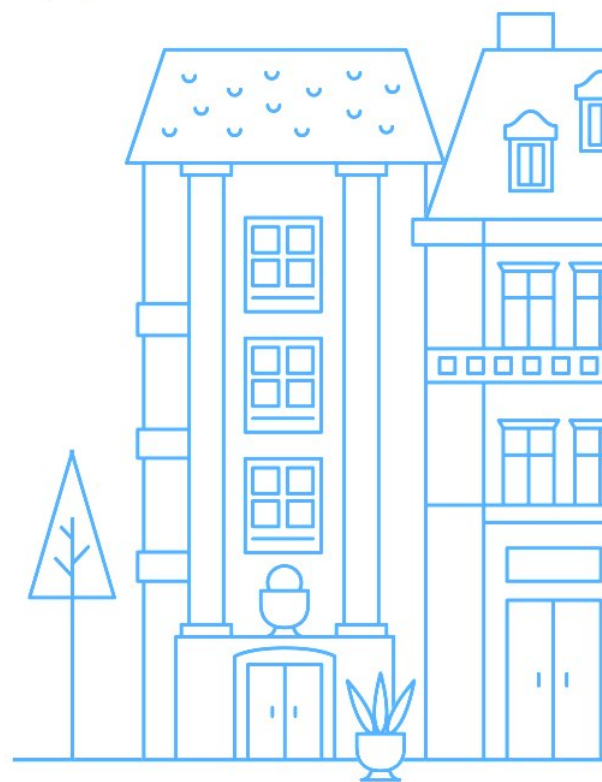


The Complete Guide To Effective Real Estate Agency Websites

Not many real estate agencies today can promote and grow their business without a website. It would be crazy not to have your own slice of the world wide web! Any brand's website is essentially their resume, their business card and their portfolio of works.

It is the first point of call and it could very well be the difference between landing a potential new client or even a sale. But unfortunately for some agencies, their websites are not up to scratch.

In a rapidly changing technological world, the automations, integrations and all the bells and whistles in websites are endless, and they make all the difference. Take a look at our complete guide to an **effective real estate agency website**.



Why should real estate agencies invest in a website?

Buyers, renters and just about anyone interested in real estate are increasingly turning to real estate agency websites. This trend will grow as people become more tech-savvy, time-sensitive, mobile-device dependent or even impacted by restrictions on movements and distance.

The real estate journey starts on mobile

Today, almost all buyers head online and use real estate websites to search for properties and to fulfill their property-related goals and needs.

Agency websites will play a crucial role in helping people achieve their goals. While large real estate portals dominate in terms of online searches, a real estate agency's website can provide a more targeted, personal and value-added experience for those who visit it.

Virtual house hunting is increasingly popular, with some 12 million Australians visiting realestate.com.au each month, whether to buy, sell or for some other purpose like research. With time on their hands and movements restricted, many people stuck in lockdown have also jumped online to look for and view real estate. Through the pandemic, real estate portals have seen a sharp rise in search from overseas buyers, including from the UK, US and Asia.

Keep up with rapid changes

The first time a buyer will look at a property is likely to be online, far ahead of other media such as print,

television, radio and outdoor or board advertising. Most people also purchase or sell property via a real estate agent or broker and transactions are also moving online and digital.

The impact of evolving changes and trends in property is driving more real estate agencies to have an online presence. Investing in a website has become crucial for any agency that wants to generate leads, promote its listings and services, and to establish and grow its brand. The world is so interconnected online and the real estate industry is no different.

A well-designed website will also offer a more in-depth and fulfilling experience with stories of buyers and sellers, market trends, neighbourhood profiles, blogs, video content and useful links.

A website that is both professional and personal can give an agency a sense of authenticity and personal connection that is so crucial. Agencies that fail to invest in websites or those who are stuck with poorly designed and hard-to-navigate sites will likely be left behind in an age of rapid transformation.

And what is invested and done behind the scenes to build, maintain and upgrade a website will determine if an agency succeeds in attracting and retaining visitors and clients.

What Makes An Effective Real Estate Agency Website?

UI & UX

A real estate agency has just seconds to catch and retain the attention of anyone who visits its site. At a time when there are countless real estate agency websites to choose from, it is crucial for an agency's online presence to stand out in at least a few key areas.

Websites are excellent to capture lead information but this needs to be a seamless experience. A good website will have plenty of content and features that will help capture lead information. However, requiring a potential client to fill in numerous details and contact information is to be avoided.

First Impression Counts

Spending time and resources to build an attractive website from the start, and one that can be improved upon easily, is crucial. Users click past and usually do not return to clunky sites that are difficult to navigate or slow to load. A site with quality images and visuals, and supported by easy-to-read content and useful links, is more likely to retain visitors and be recommended to others.

A quick response time for more information or a query from a visitor is another sign that the agency is professional and respects the visitor's input and interaction with it. Nothing deters a potential buyer more than when they are kept waiting for a response to their query.

A reply from a real person from the agency is a better option than an automated reply from a machine.

The Experience

A user's interface (UI) with the home page, related pages and visual elements of an agency's website will quickly determine how long they stay or re-visit the site. And a user's interaction or experience (UX) with what the agency has to offer in terms of services and products is the next important consideration.



A Mobile World

With mobile devices growing in popularity, these are being used by the majority of online users when searching for property.

Increasingly, more young people are entering the market as buyers or investors, and a website needs to be agile and responsive to this growing market segment.

It is important to design a website that can interact with every device and screen size (PCs, tablets, iPads, mobile phones and other devices). Future-proofing it to work with new devices will save time and money in the long run.

The growth of mobile device usage for real estate purposes has been exponential and an agency website needs to cater for this and be able to keep up with technological advances.

Raine&Horne.

"A major selling tool when prospecting for new franchisees. Enhanced performance of R&G technologies through tight integration being one click/step to activate."

Angus Raine

Executive Chairman

comptongreen

"The perfect partner in our changing, challenging real estate industry. We can't be progressive without asking questions."

Adrian Butera

Managing Director

Content Management System

What is a Content Management System?

To put it simply, a Content Management System, or CMS, is an application that is used to manage and publish web content. Once your website is built, the CMS allows for multiple users to create, contribute, edit and publish. With no prior experience or knowledge in web development required, users will be able to seamlessly navigate the backend of a website and make changes as necessary. Chances are you've heard of the largest and most used CMS worldwide, WordPress. It is the unquestionable leader in website development, powering an impressive **39.6%** of all websites online.

When is a CMS Used?

Having a CMS is a crucial component of an easy-to-update website. If coding and web development aren't your forte, then a CMS is a no-brainer. Understanding the mechanics behind how a website works isn't necessary as you can simply refer to a streamlined dashboard to navigate and create content and the CMS software will convert it into code for you. Any website with a good CMS like WordPress is simple and easy to manage with changes just clicks away.

Main Elements of a CMS

- Creating and publishing content
- Multiple-user access and use with the ability to assign different levels of permissions
- Management of library, including images and videos
- Quick edit and create content tools
- Automatically form clean URLs based on what Google would want to see (SEO)



Which CMS Platform To Choose?

There are a lot of CMS options out there, but when deciding which is the right one for you, there are a few things to consider:

Open Source

Finding an Open Source CMS is a smart strategy for a real estate agency website to function effectively without being locked into a proprietary system. This means the software is accessible and available to anyone with access, the source code within is visible and allows for the site to be modified by any web developer.

Because of this, WordPress websites have no shortage of third-party plugins and themes to optimize a site in any way.

Alternatively, if your CMS is Closed Source software, it is owned by a specific person or business and modifications are impossible without permission. Having the flexibility of an Open Source CMS, like WordPress, means you're not locked into a proprietary system and you can be assured your access won't be limited.

Safety

Security and spam protection are critical aspects of any website, especially for businesses who rely heavily on functionality. While a popular CMS such as WordPress is going to be vulnerable to cyber attacks because of its high user rate, the software is well equipped, constantly releasing updates and patches to keep their sites safe and secure.

User Friendly

While updating website content quickly and seamlessly is essential for busy real estate agencies, it is also important that it is a task all employees have the ability to do. This is where WordPress holds an upper hand to other competing CMS software. The user-friendly platform was developed with the end-user in mind, catering to those without coding and developer knowledge. With thousands of plugins to provide a different user experience, there is something to suit everyone. Constant updates and changes to new listings can be a quick and easy update through an easy-to-use platform.

Support

WordPress is such a widely used platform, you can always find support and guidance within its worldwide community of users.

A simple Google search of a WordPress-related query will inundate you with answers and suggestions or links to other helpful guides to help you find what you're looking for.

Functionality

WordPress software is designed in a way that there is ample room for innovation, modification and change, highly desirable for an area that is ever changing and growing.

The level of functionality is unlimited through a variety of basic or premium plugins available to suit your needs.



WordPress has the functionality to offer a standard website or a website with all the bells and whistles. Its plugin directory contains specifically designed codes to enable your site to perform specific tasks tailored to any business and let users enjoy innovative on-site features.

SEO Friendly

While the term SEO, or Search Engine Optimisation, is commonly used, many agents and people, for that matter, only have a vague idea of what it really is and how crucial it is for any business, especially real estate. While the main focus with any website is building it up and making it function well, you will also need to ensure your site uses certain terms and keywords and is wholly SEO friendly from the initial stages. The structure of a website, as well as its content, plays a crucial role in ensuring your website is SEO friendly.

What is SEO?

Search Engine Optimisation is the process that helps you to increase the capacity and quality of website traffic.

Why is it so important?

Agents more than anyone would know that the search for a new home has changed dramatically over the past decade. Like most things today, everything points to the World Wide Web. Understandably, if your target audience is there, that's where you want to be too. But what happens when every business follows suit and suddenly the Internet is saturated? Whether it is a well-established real estate agency or a brand new company, everyone is trying to get to the top of a Google search, ultimately increasing their visibility online. Who makes it to the top? The website that is most SEO friendly usually does. An SEO-friendly website gives users the ability to create keyword URLs, update on page SEO elements and create additional content to help drive SEO efforts, like a blog and news/ insights page.

CRM Integrations

A Customer Relationship Management or CRM system will help you centralise and store data relating to customers and prospects, connect with clients and track interactions, and share information with your team.

Should you stick with one CRM or be agnostic to CRM?

When deciding on a CRM, it is advisable to choose a product that can interact with other platforms used by your business, as the cost and data loss of moving providers plus the cost of adapting to new CRMs can be very expensive.

A CRM agnostic approach will allow you to have access to a wide choice of industry CRM platforms and complementary technologies that will best suit the size, budget, needs and preference of your business. You will quickly be able to adopt new technologies while ensuring a seamless connection and flow across all platforms.

Other Integrations

Like any business, change and innovation are inevitable to stay ahead of the game and in an ever-changing landscape, websites are much the same. Having the option of accessing a number of integrations allows for a seamless workflow in the backend for all users. The process of aggregating and channeling data from a number of different websites and sources into a single workflow is crucial to team efficiency and growth.

Residential Portals

Real estate is a busy industry, arguably one of the busiest, with a role of multiple hats, from sales through to administration and marketing.

Residential portal integrations will streamline your workflow into one space, saving you the one thing we just can't get enough of, time. Portals such as domain.com.au and realestate.com.au can seamlessly integrate into your website to allow for quick changes and updates.

Commercial Portals

If you are involved in the buying and selling of commercial and industrial property, then integrating with portals such as realcommercial.com.au, [CommercialView](https://CommercialView.com.au) and Lease.com.au, will help you grow your business.

ReTech / PropTech Platforms

Creating a seamless user experience is at the core of any brand's website, especially for real estate agencies looking to drive new leads based purely on the content of their site, for example for sale and lease listings. Allowing users to effortlessly navigate a site and engage in certain areas of interest like Tenapp and OpenAgent keeps their efforts within the one place. People are time poor and there is an

expectation of ease and instant answers when using anything online, therefore your website has to offer integrations that can provide this seamless experience. Proptech platforms will only continue to grow and develop, building your website out with these advances in-line from the get-go will propel your brand's online presence.

These automations keep your leads more informed and up to date with local area results and data, without you needing to do the leg work. These feeds grant visibility into customer behaviors and activities within the site, and allow you to gather information about their browsing habits to then remarket effectively.

Marketing Platforms

Automating and integrating the processes involving an agency website and business applications can save massive amounts of time and money and better yet, make more of it. Integrating popular marketing platforms such as Mailchimp, ActivePipe, iRealty and more helps nurture leads and develop better relationships with customers before they even talk to the sales team.

Ray White®

"VaultRE provides an enterprise grade API-first platform that allows for an improved flow of data through our system."

Jason Alford

National Technology Manager

Using these integrations you can acquire various statistics to help measure visitors' enthusiasm toward specific marketing campaigns, so before your sales team takes over the lead they have a better gauge of their interest. These processes are essential for any real estate business to perform efficiently, effectively and scale.

Pricing

As an agency, your website is the most important sales and marketing tool you have. It's the basis of your marketing and the place your leads want to explore before making a phone call or enquiry.

A website is also the first consideration a business will make, narrowing down the available domain, the URL and the overall theme. To keep up with competitors or better yet, be ahead of them, an updated and well-maintained website is necessary. But how much does it cost? New website builds could set you back anywhere from \$5,000 through to \$150,000, and it comes down to the design, the build, number of pages, functionality, responsiveness and more.

When it comes to real estate, there is so much content required to advertise each individual listing,

so be prepared to pay the higher end of the scale with any ordinary web developer.

Luckily for you, there are some providers now adopting monthly subscription services as opposed to bulk upfront payments. These options help with both cash flow and new agencies that have a limited marketing budget. With subscriptions starting at just \$250 per month, agencies can have a fully-functional website with the same integrations, inclusions and level of content as a \$150,000 website.

Real Estate Agent Websites

Most agents have some sort of online presence, mainly via a parent agency site or within a larger real estate portal like REA or Domain. There is a trend for agents, who have their own agencies or who are part of a group, to have their own personal websites.

This is important for personal branding, that is, to create awareness in a crowded market of who you are, what you stand for and the services you provide.

Why have your own website?

A website can be a key tool to grow the client list from visitors to the site, and a well-designed

platform will allow an agent to reach more people in an effective and time-saving manner.

A personal website is about establishing an online presence and to differentiate from the many other agents who have or do not have a website. This is also crucial when and if an agent leaves to join another real estate agency or to start their own. It allows the agent to own their online presence and branding, and also to collect and retain client information and data.

Make a mark

Such websites can allow an agent to access and retain information, including who and how visitors accessed their website, how often, through which

devices and so on. Such insights are invaluable to helping an agent establish a connection with potential clients.

Research has shown that homebuyers often prefer to use an agent who is empathetic to them, whether it is a single person, professional couple, large family or downsizer. Having this data via a website will allow the agent to tailor a pitch specific to the needs of a particular buyer or group of buyers.

An investment that pays off

There are many companies and experts who can help an agent design and develop a site that is effective and which is scalable for future use. A website should strike the right balance in promoting an agent and yet not be too invasive or demanding of visitors. It is also about being professional yet coming across as human and relatable.

Content, whether in words, images or multimedia, is important to attract and retain visitors and this can be enhanced with success stories and client testimonials.

Most agents are time-poor and want to spend time and energy generating leads, getting listings and closing sales. A website that promotes the agent and also frees up the agent to do their most important tasks will be worth the cost and investment.

Property Microsites

Many highly successful agents or agents specialising in niche markets create their own

websites or microsites. A microsite can exist separate from a main real estate website or within it, and is a platform for an agent to create brand awareness and to grow their client base.

Targeting a niche and clientele

For example, buyers of high-end or luxury homes have very specific demands and needs that many real estate agents will not be able to meet. But for those agents who specialise in such properties, a microsite focussing on luxury homes or investment properties is ideal to connect with such clients.

Focus on the one side of the many

A microsite will feature content that is unique and attractive to a specific clientele, and that will result in leads and generate listings or sales. Microsites are generally very specific and may focus on high-value markets such as large luxury family homes, coastal properties, acreages, holiday houses or luxury inner-city apartments and penthouses.

There are run-of-the-mill brochures that many real estate agencies produce and distribute widely to promote their listings. But there are also brochures that focus on just one listing, and these stand out because of the design quality, detailed content and sometimes even the feel of the paper it is printed on. A microsite is the online version of such a brochure that promotes a particular listing and is essentially a high-quality platform to impress, attract and grow a particular clientele.

Property developer websites

Developers, large and small, are constantly launching new property projects - from boutique townhouses and units to high-rise apartments in the CBD or inner-city locales. On the outer fringes of cities and regional areas, house & land packages and large residential or mixed-use estates are increasingly popular to cater for population growth and affordability.

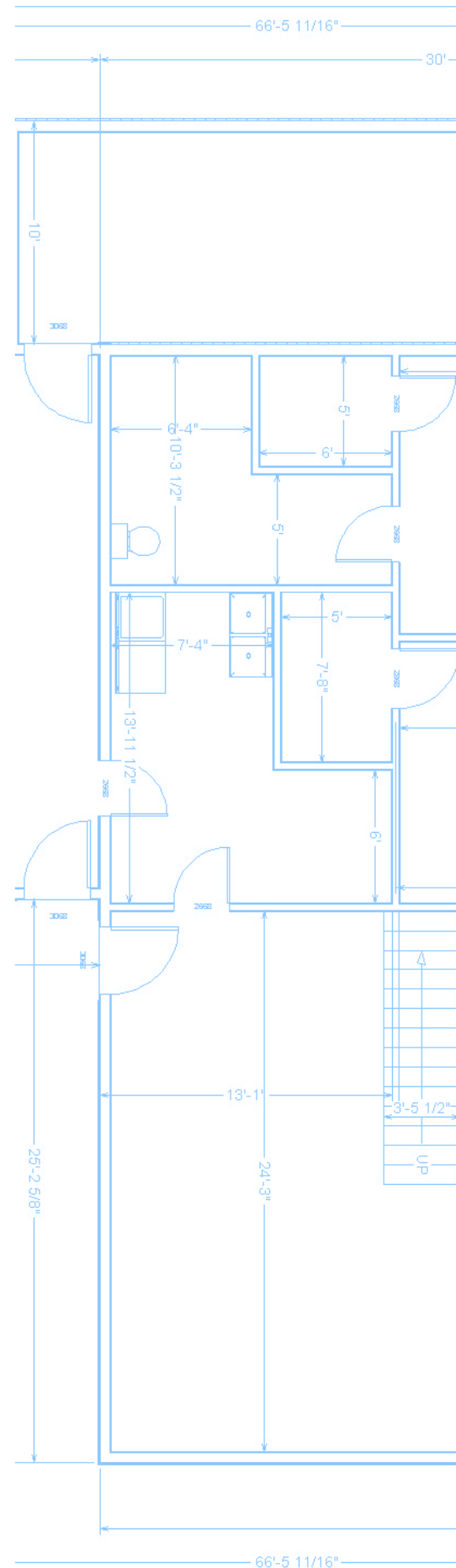
How does a developer make a project stand out from the crowd?

Many developers are using a development website as a tool to promote a project, its features and also the company or people behind the project.

It is a platform that is being more widely used to complement other advertising media such as print, billboard, TV and radio.

Such websites are targeted in their goals and effective sites have common elements including impressive images, clear content and a responsive platform that delivers a user experience across multiple devices such as mobile and desktop.

It is important that such a website is creative, yet with a functional design and features that convert visitors to clients seamlessly and retain data for future use. It should showcase a project's standout features and include client testimonials and attractions of the location and neighbourhood.



What should you look for in a Real Estate Agency website provider?

An experienced website provider should be able to design a responsive website for you to build your brand online and increase your presence and credibility. It should offer tailored packages to meet your needs and to create an eye-catching website with impressive features, including automatic listings and online enquiry forms.

Look for support and understanding

It is important that the provider understands your needs and delivers an effective design that is easy for you and your team to maintain. It should also offer training and support to achieve your goals and provide maintenance to ensure your website is up to date and secure.

that ensures it will cost-effectively adapt to current and new technology.

A specialist will also understand the importance of integrating with proptech and marketing providers, and with other integrations, including CRMs.

They can help with registering and hosting your own domain name, custom branding, and offer specialist upgrades to help your business grow.

Are they generalists or specialists?

While generalists have a broader knowledge of the industry, specialist website providers are experts with an in-depth understanding of the real estate market.

Up-to-date with market trends, specialists can develop a site with state-of-the-art functions and user-friendly features. They know what will interest the visitor, including property listings, neighbourhood information and suburb profiles.

They can create a responsive design that captures the user's attention within seconds, is compatible with all devices, and built with a real estate CMS

Examples of previous work

A provider's reputation is an important consideration and they should have a track record of working with real estate agency websites.

Check the websites they have launched to see their work and speak to the franchise groups or independent agencies which have used their services



Testimonials

Choosing the ideal real estate website provider to go with can be challenging, and an ideal way to learn about the provider and determine the value of their products and services is by checking feedback and reviews from past clients.

A quality provider should have a dedicated Testimonials page complementing its About Us page and Product page. It will have endorsements and recommendations from previous customers who have benefitted from a product or service.

Find out more on social media

Social media and online reviews are also helpful when researching customer satisfaction, with 91% of people regularly and occasionally reading online reviews, and 84% trusting online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

NORTHSOUTH
REAL ESTATE

"We have been extremely happy with the service provided and the delivered website and subsequent marketing have been second-to-none."

Tom Kralikas

Director, North South Real Estate

84% trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.



Conclusion

In Australia, the total value of residential real estate will be worth more than \$8 trillion this year. Real estate is the largest commodity in the world. And the sector is being transformed by new and emerging technology every day that is impacting everything from the way property is listed and sold to how real estate agencies manage their business operations.

In a saturated real estate market, how can a real estate agency stay ahead? The traditional way in which real estate buying and selling and running an agency business has been resistant to evolve but technology and the Internet have meant rapid transformation that threatens to leave many behind. And the speed of change is likely to get faster, not slower.

Taking advantage of such changes and staying ahead will be crucial to an agency's immediate success and future prospects. A website is one important tool that real estate agencies can use to streamline its tedious and time-consuming processes, market its services, generate leads and connect with clients.

Investing in a well-designed, fully functional and scalable website through a specialist provider will ensure both immediate benefits through user interaction and experience together with long-term gains with business efficiency, marketing and lead generation opportunities.

About PropTech Group

PropTech Group, listed on the Australian Exchange (ASX:PTG) provides technology to more than 50% of Australia's real estate agents and has a rapidly growing presence in New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

We provide technology for real estate agents to stay ahead of the game through brands such as VaultRE in Australia and New Zealand and VaultEA in the United Kingdom.

Other prominent offerings include Eagle, PropPay, My Desktop, Website Blue, Designly, Real Estate Investar and Rent Find Inspector.

We aim to simplify and streamline the way people buy, sell and rent property through smart technology. Each of our products are powerful on their own, but they work even better together.



 proptechgroup.io

 sales@proptechgroup.io

 1300 184 661

 www.facebook.com/proptechgroup.io

 www.linkedin.com/company/proptech-group



Residential CRM



Commercial CRM



Property Management CRM



Integrations



Payment Solutions

Agency & Agency Websites



Data & Analytics



Security & privacy



Marketing automation

