

Ross Hair's

# Social NETWORKING MIND MAP

How to Convert  
Social Networking into  
**MORE** Real Estate Closings!



[www.SocialNetworkingMindMap.com](http://www.SocialNetworkingMindMap.com)

# Social Networking Mind Map for Real Estate

**“How to Convert Social Networking into More Real Estate Deals and Closings”**



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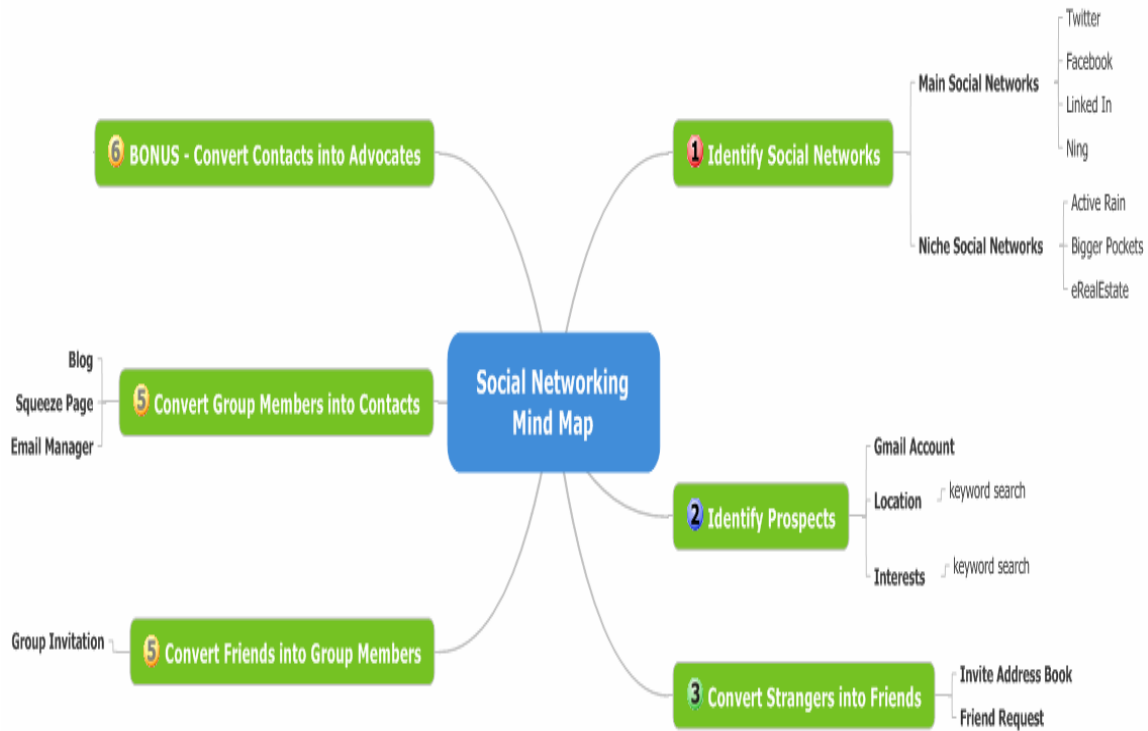
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# SOCIAL NETWORKING MIND MAP



## Foreword – **IMPORTANT!**

The Social Networking Mind Map is a follow up to the Social Media Mind Map. If you haven't read the Social Media Mind Map you can download it by [clicking here](#).

I've repeated the introductory section from the Social Media Mind Map.

If you've read the Social Media Mind Map you can jump forward to Section 2 titled "Social Networking Fundamentals".

## 1. Why Social Networking Works for Real Estate

**Let's get straight to the bottom line ...**

This report has been written for real estate professionals and real estate investors and it's designed to accomplish just one thing:

**“Show you how to convert social networking into more real estate deals and closings”**

It starts from the premise that *you can* use social networking as a business marketing tool to close more real estate deals and not just as a way to stay connected to your personal friends.

Sure it's fun to chit chat with your buddies and reunite with long lost school friends but it's also fun to go to a closing and get a nice fat check from a real estate deal.

I know that feeling and it **never** gets old.

So I'll type it out in **bold letters** one more time:

**You can use social networking as a business tool to close more real estate deals!**

**Let's talk about what works and what doesn't work ...**

This report is written from my personal experience and it reflects the techniques and strategies I use to drive my own real estate business. I'm only going to talk about what works. I'm sure you're not interested in what doesn't work.

I'm a full time real estate broker and investor and a huge social media fan.

I think it's important for you to know that everything you read in this report is something that I do on a daily basis.

I certainly didn't invent social media marketing. I've worked hard and borrowed ideas and studied strategies from a number of social media gurus.

Guys like **Frank Kern, Jeff Walker** and **Perry Belcher** have all left a mark on the way I do things. You may not know any of these names in the real estate industry but they're legends in the internet marketing industry.

They're making millions of dollars from social media so I'd be a fool not to learn their strategies, right?

Most importantly I noticed that they do things completely differently from 97% of Realtors who engage in social marketing.

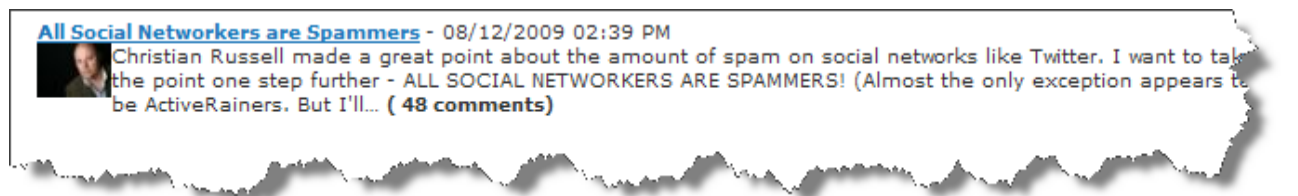
I tried to do things the conventional way and it didn't work for me (and I know it doesn't work for most Realtors). I was just spinning my wheels going round and round in circles in the endless expanse of the internet.

As soon as I started to do things like **Frank Kern, Jeff Walker** and **Perry Belcher** I started to get real results and I started to convert social media into real closings.

### **Let's get you started the right way ...**

I know from my own experience that social marketing is confusing, frustrating and quite frankly overwhelming. I've also spoken to dozens of Realtors and received a great deal of feedback that confirms that social media is basically too overwhelming for most real estate professionals.

I recently posted two blogs that were featured on [Active Rain](#) (a great social network for real estate professionals).




They caused quite a buzz and stirred up **loads of comments**.

It made me really think about the one question that's on every Realtor's mind:





**“How do you convert social media and social networking into more closings?”**

It became clear from the comments that social media is important but it's also very frustrating and overwhelming to many Realtors.


Here are a few of the comments from Active Rain ...



There is so much it is easy to get overwhelmed. Agents should try to pick good tools that work for them and develop those tools well, rather than have a bunch of half backed strategies.


Gene Riemenschneider Realtor Brentwood Homes for Sale (Area Pro Realty) [Delete](#) | [Report a Concern](#) 10:52am



Ross,

I would find a step-by-step, day-by-day course very helpful. Something that would take about 15 minutes per step. Unless utilizing social media and blogging is broken down into tiny pieces, it becomes too overwhelming for me.

Berkeley California Real Estate with Chris Cohn (Pacific Union Real Estate) 10:32am • [#11](#)



The inability to convert "friends" into closings is truly at the center of social media. I am still looking for a comprehensive marketing plan that incorporates the use of social media. Although I consider myself tech savvy, and understand alot of the technology "speak", I am dueless as to how to implement technology, the internet and social media all into one smooth "marketing plan".

And another somewhat related problem: How do e-mail blasts work if your SOI opts out of your e-mail newsletter?

DEBORAH STONE (REALTY SOURCE) [Delete](#) | [Report a Concern](#) 10:27am

All the comments reminded me of my early experience with social marketing. I remember the frustration, the long hours in front of the computer and the poor return on time invested.

Quite honestly, I was running around like a chicken without a head. I really didn't have a social marketing plan because I didn't know where to start or how to be a social marketer.

The technology was confusing and my mind was bogged down by information overload.

But the biggest problem was I didn't know for sure if you could convert social marketing into more real estate closings. That's a tough one because it's really difficult to keep going and tough it out if you don't know if the end line even exists.

### **It's the reason I wrote this report.**

I remember how tough it was for me and I don't want you to have the same experience.

Some people think I'm crazy for sharing **my secret sauce** with other real estate professionals but I don't care what they think.

It's my pleasure to help you as a fellow real estate professional and **Good Karma** is payment enough.

Just think of me when you next refer a client to Colorado ☺

## **2. Here's the single most important thing about my social networking strategy ...**

Here's what I found out about social networking!

I found that the things that worked for me often seem counter intuitive, but they work for me so that's why I do them.

Try this for counter intuitive!

### **I think it's too difficult to sell real estate online. So I don't even try.**

Is that a crazy statement or what?

It's certainly counter intuitive.

Why write a report about converting social marketing into real estate closings if you think it's too difficult to sell real estate online?

What I found was that it was difficult to sell real estate online but much easier to sell it offline in the real world.

So I don't try to sell online. I sell it offline. (Actually, I don't even sell it offline because I refer 99% of my deals to the 296 real estate agents in my nationwide referral network).

I only try to do one thing online.

Do you know what that is?

**All I try to do online is get a name and email address and permission to email.**

My entire social marketing plan is designed to turn a stranger into a "friend" and then turn my new "friend" into a contact.

I'm marketing just for contact details. That's it!

You see I found that although it was difficult to sell real estate online, it was really easy to make friends online.

How easy?

Well, I currently have 38,000 online friends and that number grows at a rate of 500 new friends a day.

I own or run 20 real estate groups on Facebook, Linked In and Twitter and own my own real estate social networks on Ning.

Here's a screen shot of one of my social networks on Ning. It's a social network for real estate investors.

I get so many deals from this network and it's turned into a little goldmine.

The screenshot shows the eRealEstate.com website. At the top left is the logo for eRealEstate.com. Below it is the tagline "... social network for real estate investors". A navigation bar contains links for Main, Invite, My Page, Social Networks, Groups, Notes, Community, Resources, and Listings. Below this is another set of links: Free REI Course, Help, Chat, and Manage. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there is a search box titled "Analyze Deals on the MLS" with an "Edit" button. Below this is a search filter for "Investment Property" with dropdown menus for State (Colorado), Type (-- Any Type --), Price Range (\$0 TO \$300,000), and Sort options (Sort by Cash Flow, Sort by Est. Equity). A "Run This Search" button is at the bottom of the search filter. To the right of the search filter is a "Text Box" with an "Edit" button and a "+ Add Text" option. Below the text box is another section titled "Instantly Search over 780,000 MLS Properties to Find Hidden Deals" with an "Edit" button. This section contains text: "You can now instantly search over 780,000 MLS properties by discount, cash flow and cap rate and receive a full financial analysis on each potential deal." and a "Search Now" button. Below this is a section titled "Best Collection of Real Estate Investment Forms and Agreements" with an "Edit" button. This section features an image of a stack of papers and text: "Download 68 real estate forms and agreements critical to the success of your real estate investment business - ..." and "Latest Agreements..." with links for "Option Contract for Short Sales..." and "Short Sale Disclosures".

This network is tougher to grow than Facebook, Linked In and Twitter but it's absolute gold because I get the full contact details and a financial profile of every member.

Do you see the significance of this network?

Every time a new member signs up I meet my sole goal of converting a stranger into a contact because I get the new member's contact details.

Here's a screen shot from a **Linked In** group that I have with my partner Jason Donn.

**Search Results (4,818)**

**Finance Club** [Join this group »](#)  
We help worldwide finance\* professionals boosting their career, closing more deals and growing their industry network. \* Accounting, Banking, Capital markets, Financial Services, Insurance, Investment Banking, Investment Management, Real Estate, Venture Capital, Private Equity Tags: Job  
Owner: [Martin Luenendonk](#) | 26,584 members | [Share](#)

**Real Estate Finance & Investment Society** [Already a member](#)  
For investors in commercial or residential real estate or notes (retail, industrial, office, multifamily, hospitality, land, golf, condo, storage). Including, REO, distressed debt, acquisition/development, CMBS, CDO, syndication, mortgage brokerage, lending/banking, law, workouts, mezzanine, etc.  
Owner: [Jake Little](#) | 21,393 members | [Share](#)

**Real Estate Connect** [Join this group »](#)  
Welcome to the Inman News Real Estate Connect group on LinkedIn. The purpose of this group is to promote greater networking within the Real Estate industry. Our hopes are that you can use this group as a tool to expand and grow your sphere of contacts.  
Owner: [Jeff Bernheisel](#) | 16,951 members | [Share](#)

**Real Estate Open Networkers - eRealEstate.com** [Already a member](#)  
Open Network with the real estate industry including REO, Mortgage, Commercial, residential, Architecture, Project Management Consultants, Builders, Developers, Real Estate, Construction. The group is for anyone who wants to network with other industry professionals through Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and more.  
Owner: [Jason Donn](#) | 12,267 members | [Share](#)

I ran a search for real estate groups on Linked In and came up with 4,818 results. That means that there are 4,818 groups on Linked In. That's a lot of groups.

My group is the fourth largest real estate group on Linked In with 12,267 members. It grows at a rate of about 50 new members a day – and it's completely on auto-pilot.

Now here's the beautiful thing. As the group leader I can broadcast a message through the site's internal message system to over 12,000 members at the click of a button.

How powerful is that?

I've also developed a system whereby I have the email address of every single member of my Linked In groups. I can send them an email at any time. This makes my Linked In group much more valuable to me than say my Facebook groups where I don't get each member's email address.

Here's another group I run on **Facebook**.



We have 3,942 members in this group. You can see that we have 188 new members so the group is growing quickly.

Just like our Linked In group we can broadcast a message to every member at the push of a button.

One big disadvantage is that I don't have access to each member's email address.

Here's the point about showing you a few of my groups.

Do you see how that's completely different from almost every other real estate agent who engages in social media marketing?

They're trying to get listings and sell real estate.

I'm just trying to get a name and email address.

They're focused on putting up links to their listings, telling the world they just came from a closing and promoting the \$8,000 first time buyer tax credit as the greatest thing since sliced bet.

Their whole strategy is to try and sell real estate online.

That's a real tough sell!

I'm not dismissing this as a way to build your online brand but I am telling you that it didn't work for me as a sales tool.

If that's what you're doing right now, by all means carry on doing it. Just tweak your strategy to add a way to capture your friends' contact details.

I've basically told you my secret strategy. I've given you my secret sauce.

Here it is in one paragraph:

I don't try to sell online. Instead, I put all my thought and energy into creating a system to get my new online friend's email address and permission to contact the email owner.

If this one strategy is the only thing you learn today you will have had a major break through in your social marketing mission and you will be ahead of 97% of the real estate industry.

Next I'm going to share my Social Networking Mind Map and share the five easy steps to successful social networking.

# SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR REAL ESTATE MIND MAP



## 2. Social Networking Fundamentals

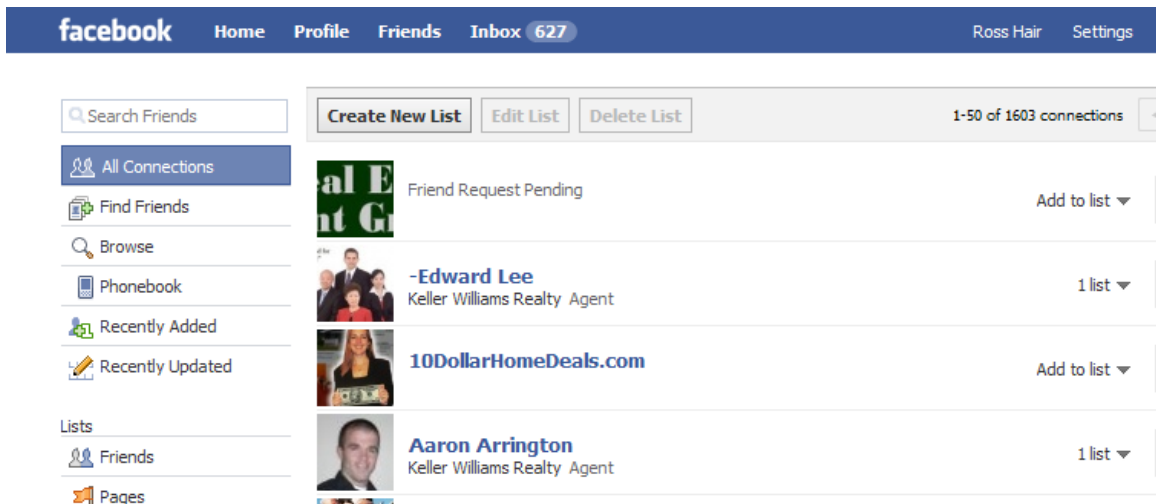
This is an advanced report for real estate professionals who want a clear strategy to become social leaders on the main real estate social networks.

You'll learn advanced networking tactics that will help you rapidly build a network of friends and convert your new friends into more real estate closings.

### a. Grow Your Social Network Membership

It is critical that you grow your number of friends and contacts on social networks.

Here's a snapshot of a few friends that I have on Facebook:



To do this you need to join the most important social networks and harvest contact details, including first name, last name and email address.

There are two primary ways to contact members of social network.

1. Friends – most networks allow you to send a message to your friends.
2. Groups – most networks allow you to mass email your group members.

I'm going to show you how to make friends and build groups on the four main social networks - Facebook, Linked In, Ning and Twitter.

## **b. The Fatal Flaw**

I want to alert you upfront to the fatal flaw in your social networking strategy.

The problem is that you can only communicate with your friends and group members through the internal communication system provided by the social network.

What happens if the social network decides to shut down your account (happens all the time), change the rules to limit or eliminate mass emailing or just plain make it difficult for you to use the mass email feature?

The fatal flaw is that you don't have the contact details and email address of your friends or group members. All your hard work building your network will be lost.

The last step of your social networking growth plan is to get the contact details and email address of every friend and group member.

The way to do this is to drive your friends and group members out of the social network and to your website, blog or squeeze page. You need to move your connections into your environment.

To entice your connections to your website you need to offer them something that makes it worth their while to follow your link. I like to give away quality free information (like this report). It's pretty fair swap – I give away great information and my connection provides me with their contact details.

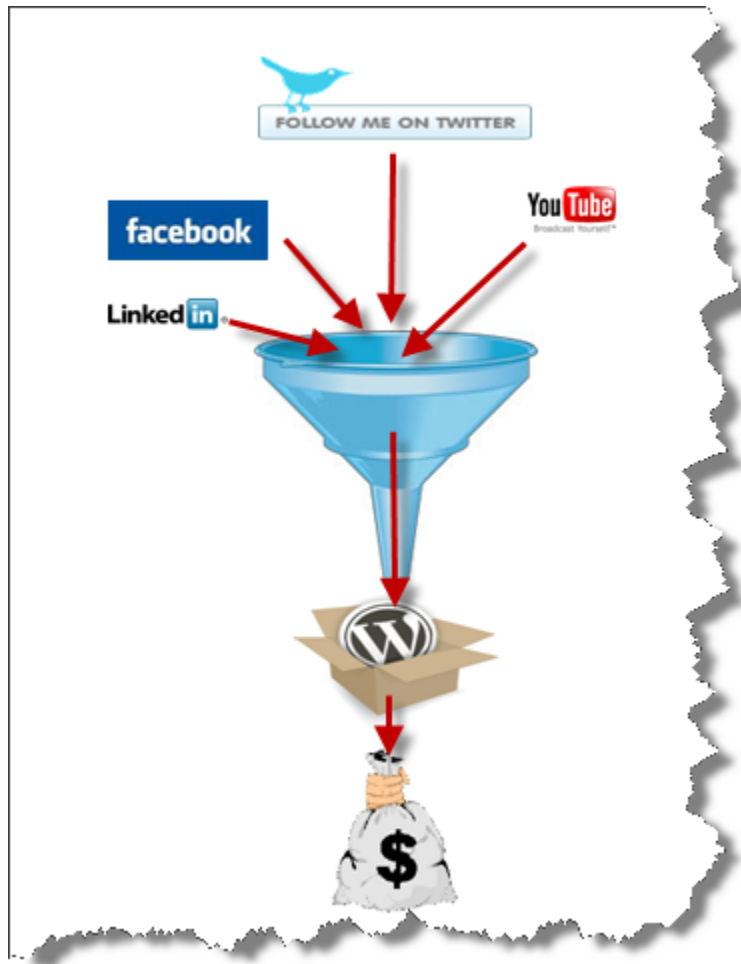
Now I have a great database of prospects to market products to at my own time and convenience. I don't need to worry about getting shut down by the social network.

### **c. Funnel Strategy and the Social Marketing Funnel**

When you design your social networking plan you need to design it as a giant funnel that identifies prospects and drives them through social networks and into an email database.

Remember, your immediate goal is to get your friends' contact details.

I like to learn things visually so I developed the diagram below to help explain how I build my social networking funnel.



Think of a huge funnel.

At the top of the funnel sits your social networks like Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Linked In and Active Rain. Their role is to help you find identify prospects and make new online friends.

Twitter sits on top the funnel and acts as a huge billboard where you can broadcast your message to thousands of people.

With Facebook and Linked In you can make friends and use their communication tools to accelerate the process of converting your friends into customers who will buy or sell real estate.

WordPress is your blog. It's your backyard barbeque where you can entertain people and establish yourself as a real estate expert.

The “Money Bag” is your email database. You know that if you can get your friends’ contact details it’s like putting money on the bank.

That’s the social media marketing funnel. It’s designed to convert your online friends into contacts.

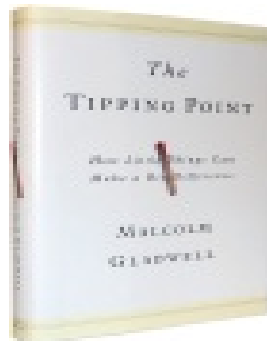
Remember, your immediate challenge is that you don’t have contact details for your new online friends.

To get contact details you need to drive your friends down the marketing funnel and direct them to through your blog into your contact database.

#### **d. The Tipping Point**

Now I’m going to share a concept with you that will blow your mind.

It’s called the Tipping Point. It’s based on the book by Malcolm Gladwell to explain why some things become a social epidemic and just take off.



The tipping point is that exact point in time when all your social networking efforts pay off and your marketing goes into auto-pilot.

It’s that point where you no longer need to put in the long hours building your network because your network will go into auto-pilot and build itself.

It’s the deepest, darkest secret about social networking that no-one will tell you (until now).

The tipping point works like this.

I have a real estate group on Linked In. The group is the fourth largest real estate group and it grows at a rate of fifty people a day. That's fifty people a day who sign up to join the group (and give me their contact details).

Here's the thing – I don't do any marketing on Linked In. I don't build friend lists (called connections) or invite people to join the group. They do it all by themselves. **My Linked In group runs on auto-pilot!**

So why does this happen?

The reason is so simple it will sound silly.

What happens is a member does a keyword search on Linked In looking for a real estate group. The search results give a list of real estate groups and rank them by size (number of members). The member looks at the list and then joins the five largest groups.

It's that simple.

The reason that the member joins the top five groups is because of a concept called social proof. If you know nothing about a group, the one way to evaluate it is look at the number of members. If it has a large number of members, it's probably a good group. You would rationalize that people know more than you about this group and you would reason "Why would so many people join it if it wasn't a good group?"

That's a social proof. You validate your decision to join the group by deferring to the assumed expertise of so many others.

In reality all the number of members validates is the quantity of members not the quality of the group. Once the group is large enough people simply assume it's good and join the group – hence the viral growth.

That's how my real estate group on Linked In grows on auto-pilot.

**e. A Repeat Reminder - Remember Your End Goal!**

Before I show you how to grow your social networks, I want you to be clear about what it is you want to achieve by growing your network.

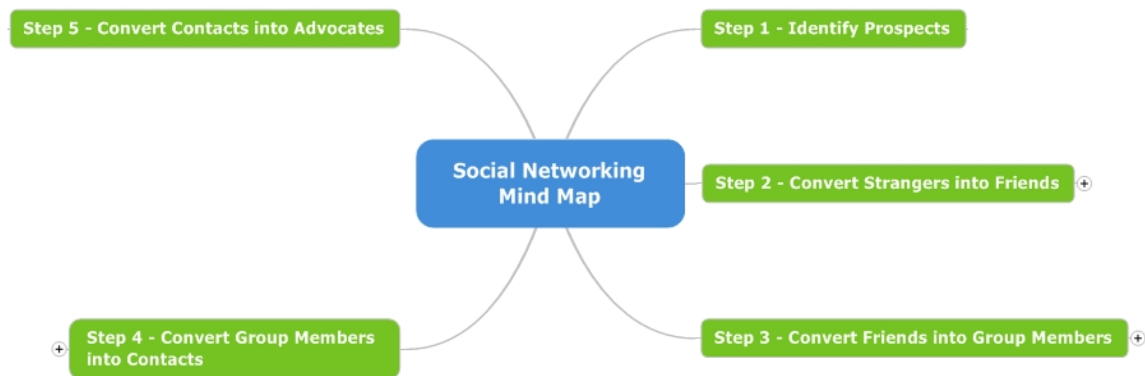
What's your end goal?

My goal is to make as many friends as possible and mass communicate with them all at the same time through an email broadcast. I want to meet a stranger on a social network and get that stranger's contact details, especially an email address.

When you break it all down, all I'm really trying to do is use social networking to build my email database.

The core asset of my business is my email mailing list and I want to build it as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### 3. 5-Steps to Social Networking Success



I'm going to give you the simple five step plan to becoming a social networking superstar. If you follow all five steps you will succeed and convert your social networking into more real estate closings.

- i. Step 1 – Identify Prospects
- ii. Step 2 - Convert Strangers into Friends
- iii. Step 3 – Convert Friends into Group Members
- iv. Step 4 - Convert Group Members into Contacts
- v. Step 5 – Convert Contacts into Customers

#### i. Identify Prospects

The first step is that you need to identify members of the social network who are prospective clients.

This is quite easy to do.

I do a great deal of work with investors. The good thing about investors is that they congregate in the same place making them really easy to find. All you need to do is join a real estate investor group on any one of the main social networks and you'll immediately find more than enough potential clients.

It's a little more difficult to find home buyers and sellers.

The main tool that you can use is a search tool for everyone in your local area. If you work in Atlanta you can simply search for all members who live in Atlanta. It's a pretty wide demographic but everyone needs shelter so just about everyone in your area is a potential customer.

## **ii. Convert Strangers into Friends**

Most social networks limit your ability to communicate with strangers. If you want open communication with another member of a network you need to convert that stranger into a friend.

Step two is to establish a relationship with your prospects by inviting them to become your friend.

It's a really simple process – all you do is send a friend request. If your prospect accepts your request you will be linked to each other and can communicate directly.

## **iii. Convert Friends into Group Members**

Step 3 is to convert friends into group members. The main reason you want people to join your group is that each group has a mass message function that allows the group owner to broadcast a message to every group member.

This is a huge step as now, at the click of a mouse, you can mass communicate with all your group members.

#### **iv. Convert Group Members into Contacts**

The problem with being a group leader is although you can broadcast a message to the group, this is done through the internal messaging system, and you don't have a copy of your members' contact details.

This is the fatal flaw we discussed earlier in this report.

To overcome this flaw the next step is to get the contact details of every group member.

This is where things get more difficult and a little complicated.

If your network provides you with contact details for your friend (most don't but you can pick up some contact details on profile pages or forum signatures) you should add them to your email database.

Mission accomplished!

If you don't have contact details you need to convince your friends to give you their contact details. The best way to do this is to drive your friend out of the social network and into one of your websites. You can use your blog, your real estate site or a squeeze page.

The key for me has been to give away good quality but free information.

You can use IDX search, local market reports and real estate articles that have value to your friends. In exchange for the information you'll get their contact details.

Here's the really important part – once you have their contact details you have a way to mass communicate with all your friend – anytime!

#### **v. Convert Contacts into Customers**

The final step is that you need to get a pay day by converting your contacts into customers.

I use email marketing as my primary sales tool.

You will need a good email manager and you will need to build a sales campaign to sell your services or products to your contacts.

I regularly communicate with my contacts and send them loads of free information and a number of sales offers. You'll quickly identify the contacts that are ready to buy or sell and be well on your way to a return on your marketing investment.

This is a unique skill but it's useless if you haven't gone through the process of identifying prospects and getting their contact details.

#### **4. Target and Identify Social Networks**



You can divide the social networks into primary and niche networks.

- i. The primary networks are the big four social networks, namely Facebook, Linked In, Ning and Twitter. Within each network there are thousands of real estate groups.
- ii. The secondary networks are the niche networks that cater to the real estate industry

Here's an overview of each network plus a game plan to leverage your time and grow a massive list of friends. I'm trying not to say it in too many words but I'm essentially giving you a game plan to beat the system.

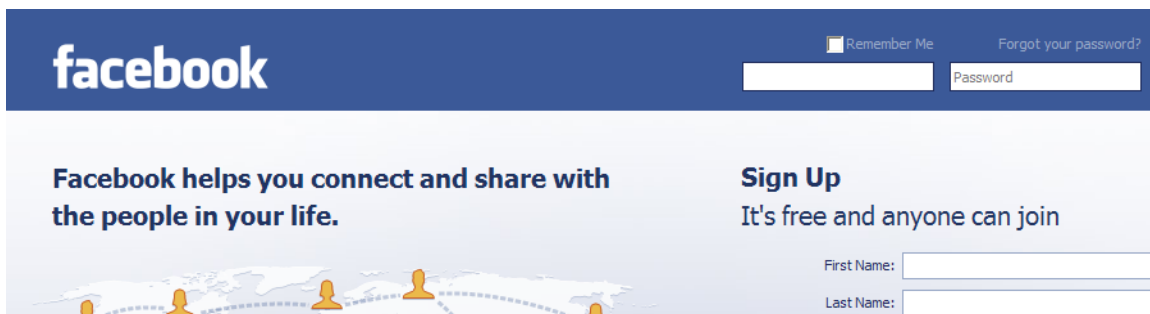
##### **a. Primary Social Networks**

There are four primary social networks that are relevant for real estate professionals. The reason they are relevant is because that's where you will find your next clients. The membership numbers are staggering, an estimated 500 million members, and people are spending more and more of their time on social networks.

The primary social networks are:

- Facebook
- Linked In
- Ning
- Twitter

**i. Facebook**



Facebook is the big Mac Daddy of all the networks.

Facebook calls your friends “friends” but other networks use different terms like associates, connections or followers. No matter the name they all enjoy the same basic relationship to you.

So step one to growing your Facebook network is to convert strangers into friends.

The obvious question is how do you convert a stranger into a friend. For now all you need to do is send an invitation to be friends (also known as a friend request).

The most important thing about a friend is that it creates a direct relationship between you and your friend. Facebook recognize this relationship and effectively open all the communication channels for you to pass information to your friend.

This means that you can freely communicate with your friend within Facebook’s internal communication structure.

Most communication is direct communication through a private messaging system. This system only allows your friend to see the message.

There's a second huge benefit to having friends. Facebook is inherently viral in nature in that when you send a public message to a friend, that message can be seen by all your friend's friends. This means that your message to a hundred friends may be seen by a thousand people. That's an incredibly viral tool.

The cornerstone of your Facebook marketing is to build a large friend list. Not only can you communicate directly with your friends but you can also send a viral message through each friend's network.

So step two is to send public messages to your friends that can be seen by each friend's network of friends.

The next step is that you need to start your own group.

I run a number of groups on Facebook. My focus is real estate so I set up a number of real estate groups. I have broad groups like Real Estate on Facebook and more niche focused groups like Denver Real Estate Investors.

One reason I do this is because I want to be seen in a position of authority as a group leader. I want all the group members to look up at me and recognize and respect me as the group leader.

Authority, trust, respect and leadership are all critical elements of doing business online.

Another reason I want to be a group leader is it creates a place for people interested in my niche to passively join my group. Strangers can do a group search by the keyword "real estate", find my group and join my group. I use the term "passively join my group" because I don't need to do any work to get the member to join my group.

I can also get someone to proactively join my group by doing a keyword search for a person with my desired demographics. As an example, I can search for someone using the keywords "Denver real estate". This will give me a list of members with the keywords "Denver" and "real estate" in their

profile. It's a two step process because I first need to invite each person to be my friend and then to join my group.

Now, the main reason I want people to join my group is that my group has a mass message function that allows the group owner to broadcast a message to every group member.

***This is an incredibly powerful function and a critical social marketing tool.***

Just think about how powerful it is to be able to send a message to every group member at the click of a mouse. Instead of sending out 4,000 messages, one a time, I send out one email to four thousand people in ten seconds flat.

That's the incredible power of social networks. You can leverage your time by mass communicating with your network.

It's not enough to just start a group. You also need to get people to join the group.

The key to rapidly growing your group is to get your friends to join your group. Your group will have an invite feature that will allow you to send out a mass invite to your friends. Note that you can't invite strangers, just members who are connected to you as a friend.

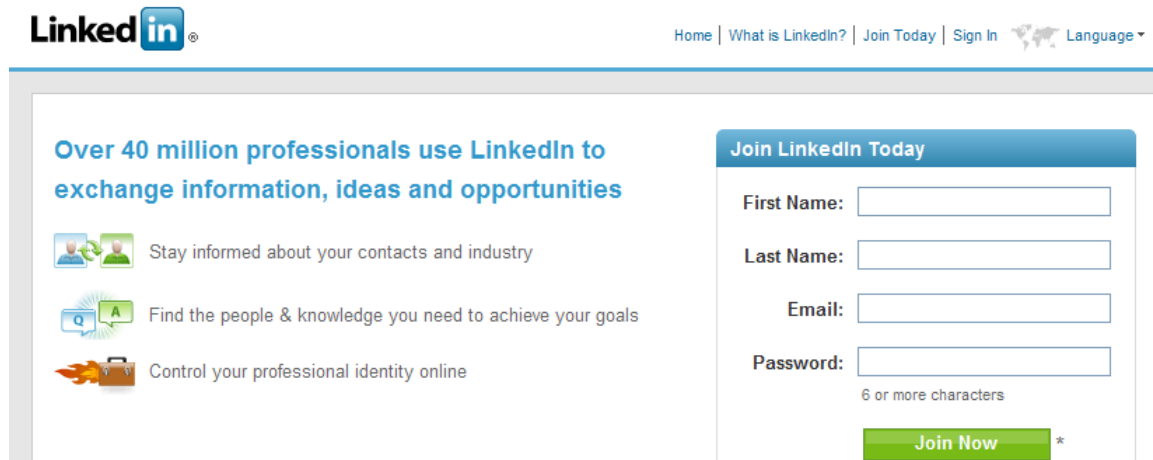
Now do you see the obvious relationship between friends and groups?

First you need to convert a stranger into a friend and then you need to convert your friend into a group member.

It's all about your ability to communicate with the other person.

You have limited communication with a stranger, direct communication with a friend and mass communication with the members of a group.

## ii. Linked In



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn homepage. At the top left is the LinkedIn logo. To the right of the logo are navigation links: Home | What is LinkedIn? | Join Today | Sign In | Language. Below the navigation is a main banner with the text: "Over 40 million professionals use LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas and opportunities". To the left of the banner are three icons with text: 1. A person icon with text "Stay informed about your contacts and industry". 2. A search icon with text "Find the people & knowledge you need to achieve your goals". 3. A briefcase icon with text "Control your professional identity online". To the right of the banner is a registration form titled "Join LinkedIn Today". The form has four input fields: "First Name:", "Last Name:", "Email:", and "Password:". Below the "Password:" field is the text "6 or more characters". At the bottom of the form is a green "Join Now" button with an asterisk.

LinkedIn is the largest social network that caters to a professional business audience.

It has over 30 million registered users, with an average age of 42, average career tenure of 9 years, and an average household income of \$109,000. The users that are on LinkedIn understand that it's a site for business and all the applications and plug-ins on the site are business tools.

Unlike Facebook, LinkedIn was designed as a business network and a tool to communicate with fellow professionals.

On LinkedIn your friends are called connections and are classified as 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree connections. You're encouraged to connect to people you already know by sending an invitation to connect.

Now I don't know about you but I'm online to meet people I don't know so I want to connect with strangers that I profile as potential clients. LinkedIn makes it a bit risky to do this as they have a penalty system based on the number of times your connection requests are declined.

LinkedIn also has a number of tools and benefits that encourage open networking. An open networker on LinkedIn is called a LION (LinkedIn Open Networker) and it's like carrying a badge that tells other members that you will accept their connection request.

There's a process you should follow to build your connections. The first step is to invite as many people as you can to network with you and become a connection. You need to play by the rules and don't arbitrarily send out invitations. Profile your connections very carefully and pick people with mutual connections and similar interests. Also make sure you send a message with your request to connect that clearly established some common ground between you and your connection. An example would be to say "we both belong to the same real estate group on Linked In" or "I saw your post about the Dallas market on the discussion board and share your opinion that the market hasn't bottomed out".

The next step is that you should start a group. As the name suggests, a group is a collection of people with similar interests. Linked In groups allow members to join others (without being connected) that share common interests or backgrounds (alumni groups are most popular).

The most important think for you to do is make sure that you start the group. Its fine to join other groups but your own group is the most important because once-a-week Linked In lets you send an email broadcast to the group. That's very powerful. No-one else can send a broadcast to the group, just you.

Now I'm about to give you my secret sauce. I've kept it under lock and key and haven't shared it with another living soul. But I'm going to give it to you right now.

In the past Linked In would allow you to download your group member list. They don't allow that anymore but here's an insider's trick. If you mark your group as a closed group that requires new members be approved by the group owner, the "awaiting approval" list includes the member's email address. You can copy the email address and add it to your database.

This is very, very important and it can't be done of Facebook or Twitter.

If I haven't mentioned it yet then let me stress that building an email list is the cornerstone of your social marketing strategy.

The second part of my secret sauce is this piece of information.

If you can build your group up to a decent size you reach a tipping point whereby your group will grow on autopilot. That's right - it grows without any effort by you.

It's a strange online phenomenon but people are attracted to large groups. Most people see the size of the group as social proof that it's a good group and join the five largest groups. If you're group is one of the top five groups, it grows by itself.

I have the third largest real estate group on Linked In. It grows at a rate of 50 people a day. That's 50 people who ask to join my group and give me their contact details. That's 50 people who I add to my contact database and who meet me in a position of credibility and authority as the group leader.

If you don't have a group there are other ways to build your network.

Linked In has a Q&A feature that allows members to brainstorm with the entire Linked In network (or targeted individuals), fostering collaboration and the ability to become recognized as an expert by the community (Expertise Area on profile).

Linked In also allows you to set up your profile to pull your blog into your personal home page and allows you to link out to your websites. This is great for pushing traffic to your website.

Finally, another great feature of Linked In is that it enjoys great SEO benefits and your Linked In profile feature prominently on any search under your name.

### iii. Ning

**Ning** lets you create and join new social networks for your interests and passions. [Join Now](#) [Sign In](#)

Create a New Social Network

Name your social network  
  
For example, Paris Cyclists

Pick a web address  
 .ning.com  
At least 6 letters. For example, parisyclists

[Create >](#)

*Create your own!*

*or find one!*

You may not have heard of Ning but I believe they will be the most successful social network and will dominate the likes of My Space, Facebook and Linked In.

The reason that you may not have heard of Ning is because Ning is different to the other main social networks.

The main difference is that Ning's business model allows you to set up your very own social network on a sub-domain of Ning. Ning acts like a hub of a wheel and your network is a spoke that leads off the hub. The end result is that Ning is made up of hundreds of thousands of smaller, independent networks with their own name, brand and identity.

Ning basically provides the technology platform for you to build your own network.

This is different to Facebook or Linked In.

Facebook makes you set up a group within the main Facebook network. Everything is branded as Facebook and is a part of Facebook. That's why Facebook's name is so well known as every member promotes the Facebook brand. This doesn't happen with Ning as every member promotes their own social network and not the Ning brand.

There are two main reasons why Ning is my favorite network.

- i. Ning allows me to set up my own social networks under my own name and brand.
- ii. Ning provides me with all the tools and functionality to manage my network and allows me to create and own detailed member profiles, including contact details.

That's the one huge advantage of Ning. If I can get someone to join my social network I get not only all their contact details but a detailed profile on their interests, needs and goals.

You can't do this with Twitter, Facebook or Linked In.

There are a number of ways to game Ning.

The best way is to aggressively make friends on other networks.

Ning allows you to see all your friends, even those on different networks. This is a very interesting feature, because although each network operates completely independent of other Ning networks, your friends stretch across all networks.

Ning allows you to send a message to all your friends across all your Ning networks. This is huge as you can poach friends on competitor networks and send them a message.

A second way to grow your contacts is to set up a group on a network.

People can join the group directly or you can invite your friends to join the group, including friends on other Ning networks. As the group leader you have the ability to broadcast a message to all the group members.

Now here's an interesting tip. When a group is created there's a function that allows the group leader to let every group member send an email to the entire group. This means that any group member can email the group, not just the group leader. You need to join groups with this feature. Please don't abuse the feature by repeatedly spamming the group.

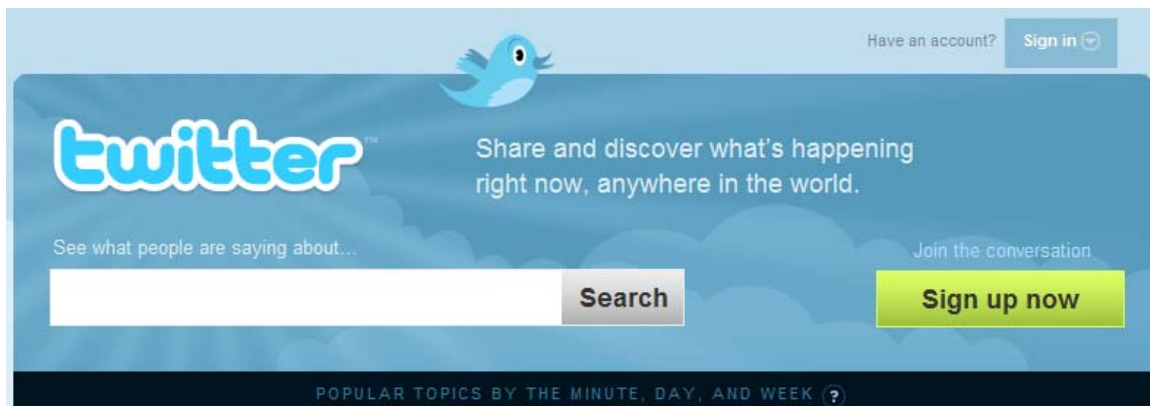
I've noticed with Ning that it's not as dynamic and fast moving as Facebook. Things happen at a much slower pace. Friend requests don't get answered immediately and the forums are slow.

One place where you can get a quick answer to a friend request is the chat feature.

Unlike Facebook where you only see your friends in the chat feature, Ning shows all network members who are online. This means you can see all network members, including members who are not yet your friend. When I see a "stranger" in the chat feature I immediately click through to their profile and send a friend request. There's a high conversion rate as the person is online and will immediately see your request.

Your growth on Ning will not be nearly as fast as your growth on the other networks, but if you start your own social network you'll have the huge advantage of getting each member's contact details and profile.

#### iv. Twitter



Twitter is the one network that has me scratching my head.

On the one hand it's a great way to rapidly grow a list of friends (called "followers") but your ability to communicate with your followers is very limited.

You never get their contact details and you can't broadcast a mass email to all your friends. You can send a direct message to one person at a time but

this is too slow and laborious for mass marketing. You can also post a message on each friend's board but this message is only visible for a few minutes.

On the surface it appears that Twitter has made it difficult for you to use it as a business tool. But if you scratch the surface you'll find that Twitter has the potential to be the most productive and viral marketing tool.

The key to Twitter is automation.

It is absolutely essential that you leverage a number of programs, like [Hummingbird](#), [TweetLater](#) or [TweetSpinner](#). The value of these programs is that it automates the laborious manual work of following and un-following other Twitter members.

It automatically removes people you are following but who have not followed you. You can also use Tweetlater to manage your tweets, automatically post replies to new followers and convert your long urls to short urls.

Just like Facebook, Linked In and Ning, Twitter also uses an open source sign up protocol so you can import all your contacts from your email accounts, like gmail, and invite them to follow you on Twitter. If you don't have a gmail account then open one immediately and export your outlook contacts to your gmail account.

One of the keys to growing your Twitter network is to understand that Twitter has a culture that encourages people to follow their followers. If I follow someone then it's very likely that they will follow me in return. The great news is that Twitter supports a number of automated tools that will automatically find, track follow and un-follow your friends and followers.

Twitter is designed to be viral.

Every time you send out a message it appears on what's called the public timeline. This means that every time you send out a message Twitter publishes it and makes it searchable to every Twitter member.

You can add keywords to your message and make them searchable by adding a hash tag before the keyword. One of my keywords is “real estate” so when I publish a tweet I would write something like this:

“Noticed a sharp drop in Denver REO listings. Has the #realestate market bottomed out?”

It’s hardly rocket science but the use of the hash and keyword will be picked up by many people looking for information about real estate or looking to follow people in the real estate industry.

When you post a tweet all your followers will have a copy of your message posted on their message board. That means that they may see your message and all their followers will be able to see your message if they’re looking at your follower’s message board.

Another viral tool is to use the reply function. The reply function is shown as @username. If I wanted to send a reply to my Twitter friend Donald Trump, I would simply use the term @DonaldTrump.

You see, using the ‘@’ sign attached to another person’s username is how a reply is made in the Twitter system. It also has the effect of creating a live link back to YOUR profile on the Twitter page of each and every one of your followers who posts a reply to your automatic welcome message.

Wow. You should read that again.

Now you can get your message on Donald Trump’s message board and get indirect exposure to thousands and thousands of his followers. You can get a link on Donald Trump’s message board that links back to your Twitter profile.

Many people who follow the link will start to follow you and your viral network just grows bigger and bigger.

And just imagine if Donald Trump sees your @reply, checks you out by going to your home page and then writes something about you to his network!

You can do the same thing with a retweet.

A retweet is identified by the “RT” prefix before the message. It’s a way to let people know that you’re reposting another person’s message.

Like a @ reply it sends a message to the person who originally posted the message.

The next step is to start to build a meaningful relationship that will convert a follower into a customer.

The first thing you need to do is carefully construct a direct message reply to every new follower. A direct message (DM) can only be sent to people who agree to follow each other.

The key to your DM is that you can automate the process so you don’t need to manually send out hundreds of messages each day.

Here are a few tips about direct messages.

Most people make the mistake of spamming or shooting out a sales pitch. It really turns people off if their first interaction with you is a straight up sales pitch. No hello, how’s business, just a command to buy a product.

Your direct message opens the door for you to build a meaningful relationship with a friend on Twitter.

Twitter is a very intriguing platform that you simply can’t afford to ignore.

## b. Niche Social Networks

The secondary real estate niche networks are:

### i. Active Rain



Join **157,013** professionals on the world's largest real estate network — free



#### **Flat Fee MLS franchise for your state only \$19 day**

eFlatFeeRealty.com

<http://www.eFlatFeeRealty.com> is now offering franchises for your state. Please email [scott@eFlatFeeRealty.com](mailto:scott@eFlatFeeRealty.com) a turn key website, program, back end and the site makes you money. Only one listing pays for the site and brand per month. We will help...

Sponsored Featured Post



#### **How To Add Video in the Comment Section of a Blog Post**

Brad Andersohn ~ Community Manager (ActiveRain)

How To Add Video in the Comment Section of a Blog Post Jeremy Blanton just did a great video tutorial for members showing how you can add video to your AR Blog posts. He requested that I do a tutorial on how to embed a video into the comments of...



#### **California Association of Realtors (CAR) Offers Job Loss Insurance**

Jim Harris (Neighborly Realty & Neighborly Financial)

Hello Neighbors, This is very cool. At a time when employment is challenging - yet buying a home is absolutely the right thing to do (and timing couldn't be better), CAR is offering "First Time Buyer Insurance". I love it. Take a look: C. A. R...

I've included Active Rain as it's the largest real estate agent social network with over 157,000 members.

Here's a key point I want you to remember about Active Rain.

Active Rain is a social network for real estate professionals.

It's not a social network for homeowners, buyers or sellers (although Active Rain is trying to move in this direction). This means the 157,000 members are primarily real estate professionals who won't be buying or selling a house through you anytime soon. Why? Because that's their job and they don't need you to do it for them!

I'm a huge fan of Active Rain so I don't want it to sound like I'm being critical of the network. The network is great but most Realtors need to adjust their expectation of what they will get from Active Rain.

I've interviewed many real estate agents who are members of Active Rain and asked them why they spend so much time on the site. In order of importance they tell me:

1. Networking for business from home buyers and sellers
2. Referrals from other agents
3. Search Engine placement as Active Rain results feature prominently
4. Learn about the real estate profession
5. Teach others about the real estate profession

When I quiz them more closely most agents admit that they haven't received any direct business from Active Rain and very little if any referral business.

I know Active Rain is aware of this and have huge plans to create consumer channels that will engage home buyers and sellers.

The more pro-active agents acknowledge that they get the best return from search engine placement as their Active Rain presence shows up well in search results.

This is very important because it helps build your online brand and reputation. If a potential client searches your name, it's a very positive thing for the client to see your profile and posts all over the place.

Newer agents find Active Rain most useful as a learning center where they can pick up ideas from more experienced agents.

OK, so let's take a closer look at Active Rain.

Active Rain is the largest social network for real estate agents with over 157,000 members. You can add associates but you can't send them a mass email. You can start a group but as the group owner you don't get access to group member's details. You can send a mass email through the sites email manager to your group members. The only way to build a following on this network would be to build a group, but it's difficult to invite members to join the group. And even if they join the group you can't send out a mass broadcast.

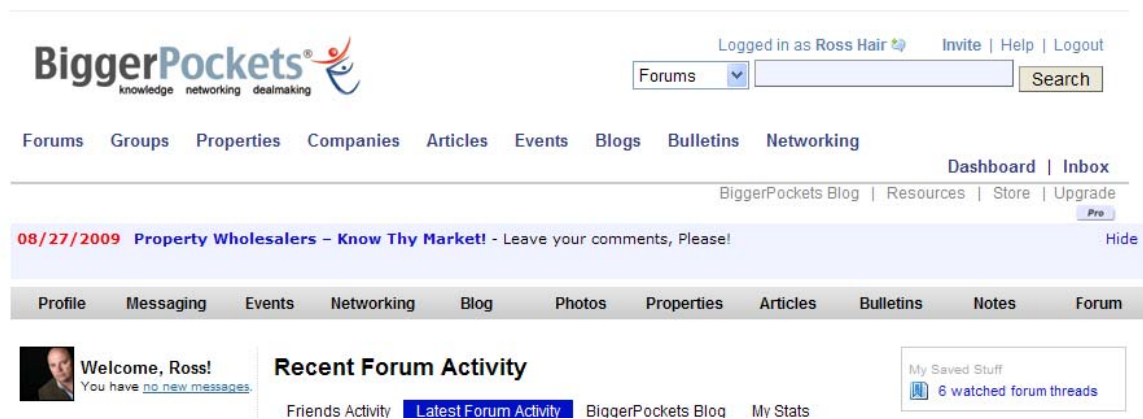
The one very powerful tool that Active Rain has is a points system that rewards participation. You get points for posting a blog, writing a comment and inviting people to join Active Rain.

Active Rain holds point's leaders in high regard and publishes their details prominently as a local expert. This is a great promotional tool to make yourself stand out as a local leader.

The problem is that if you're a new member of Active Rain you will NEVER catch up to the current point leader in your local area.

Basically Active Rain has very limited networking capabilities as there's no mass communication tool.

## ii. Bigger Pockets



The screenshot shows the BiggerPockets website interface. At the top left is the logo "BiggerPockets" with the tagline "knowledge networking dealmaking". To the right, it says "Logged in as Ross Hair" with links for "Invite", "Help", and "Logout". Below this is a search bar with "Forums" selected and a "Search" button. A navigation menu includes "Forums", "Groups", "Properties", "Companies", "Articles", "Events", "Blogs", "Bulletins", and "Networking". On the right, there are links for "Dashboard" and "Inbox". Below the navigation is a forum post header: "08/27/2009 Property Wholesalers - Know Thy Market! - Leave your comments, Please!". A secondary navigation bar includes "Profile", "Messaging", "Events", "Networking", "Blog", "Photos", "Properties", "Articles", "Bulletins", "Notes", and "Forum". On the left, a user profile section says "Welcome, Ross!" and "You have no new messages.". In the center, "Recent Forum Activity" is shown with tabs for "Friends Activity", "Latest Forum Activity", "BiggerPockets Blog", and "My Stats". On the right, a box labeled "My Saved Stuff" shows "6 watched forum threads".

The largest social network for real estate investors is Bigger Pockets.

I'm a big fan of Bigger Pockets.

It's the largest real estate investor social network with about 35,000 members. The forum is excellent and it's well supported by its members.

Unlike Active Rain, Bigger Pockets has the advantage that not only can you network with other real estate investors, but real estate investors typically buy, sell and flip deals to each other.

This means that every member of the network is a potential customer.

It's a very well run community packed with quality information and serious members. I would say that its primary benefit is educational as you can find all the resources, tools and information you need to be a real estate investor.

As a social networking tool it has some serious limitations.

The biggest problem with Bigger Pockets is that it's almost impossible to mass communicate with the members. There's no message broadcast tool so you need to send messages one by one through the private message system.

This is just too slow for me and not a good use of my time.

The strategy I would suggest with Active Rain would be to use the forum to establish yourself as an "investor friendly" real estate professional. Answer all questions on the forum and post links to articles about your area of expertise.

Because every member is a potential client, you can slowly but surely build your network.

### iii. eRealEstate.com

eRealEstate is a social network for real estate professionals and real estate investors. It's actually two separate networks built on the Ning software platform so everything I said about Ning applies to eRealEstate.

That means you can leverage the mass broadcast tools by making friends and starting groups.

## Investor Network

The screenshot shows the eRealEstate.com website. At the top, the logo reads "eRealEstate.com" with the tagline "... social network for real estate investors". A navigation menu includes links for Main, My Page, Social Networks, Groups, Community, Resources, Listings, Local Experts Wanted, Free REI Course, Help, and Chat. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Analyze Deals on the MLS:** A search form for investment property with fields for State (Colorado), Type (Any Type), Price Range (\$0 to \$300,000), and Sort By (Cash Flow or Est. Equity). A "Run This Search" button is at the bottom.
- Instantly Search over 780,000 MLS Properties to Find Hidden Deals:** A promotional banner stating that users can search over 780,000 MLS properties by discount, cash flow, and cap rate, with a "Search Now" button.
- Best Collection of Real Estate Investment Forms and Agreements:** A section featuring a stack of document icons and text about downloading 68 real estate forms and agreements. It lists "Latest Agreements..." such as "Option Contract for Short Sales...", "Short Sale Disclosures...", and "Memo of Agreement recording that you hav... an Option...".
- Welcome to eRealEstate - Real Estate Investment:** A sidebar box with a "Sign Up or Sign In" button.
- Ads by Google:** A sidebar with an "Ad" icon and text: "We Buy Houses Cash Fast in foreclosure? behind on payments? we can help no obligation www.BlissBuysPropertie". Below it, another ad lists "Buy Properties Wholesale Proven Real Estate Wealth Building Strategy - Get Rich As You".

## Real Estate Professional Network

The screenshot shows the eRealEstate.com website. At the top, the logo reads "eRealEstate.com" with the tagline "...Social Network for Real Estate Professionals". Below the logo is a navigation menu with links: Main, My Page, Networks, Resources, Community, Listings, Local Experts Wanted, and Chat. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column contains a welcome message: "The Place to Network for all Real Estate Professionals! Real Estate Brokers, Agents, Mortgage Professionals, Title Companies, Appraisers...." and a "Members" section with a grid of 15 member profile pictures and a "View All" link. The middle column features a "WELCOME to ... eRealEstate.com ... we're happy you have joined us" message above a large image of a white "HOUSE FOR SALE" sign in front of a house. Below the image is a link: "...Important Tips To Help You Use This Site Effectively...". The right column has a "Welcome to eRealEstate Sign Up or Sign In" box and a section titled "Ads by Google" with three advertisements: "Hot Real Estate Leads" (www.LeadToRealty.com), "How To Get REO Listings" (www.ReoRenegades.com), and "Buy Properties Wholesale".

eRealEstate isn't as large as Active Rain or Bigger Pockets but it has a unique and integrated approach to social networking and I firmly believe it will dominate the real estate social media niche.

The reason for this is that eRealEstate also offers huge advantages to its members when it comes to finding clients and closing more deals.

It's not just a social network as it also has a complete social media marketing platform for each member and a sophisticated real estate listing platform that generates leads for its members.

The eRealEstate social media marketing system is built on a blog platform that acts just like Active Rain's outside blog feature but starts at just \$10 a year.

And the eRealEstate Listing Platform is a proven and effective lead and referral generator for real estate agents and real estate investors.

When you combine all the components together, eRealEstate is the next evolution in social network marketing. It combines all the best features of a niche social network and adds tremendous lead and deal closing tools.

## Conclusion

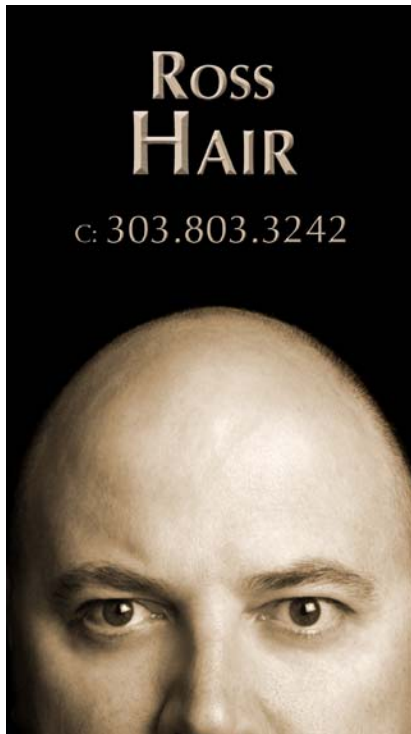
I trust this report has helped you understand the incredible marketing potential of social networking. It's a truly astonishing opportunity to leverage your time and marketing expertise to reach an unprecedented number of new customers.



Ross Hair  
RealEstateAdvocate.com

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## About Ross Hair



Ross Hair is bald.

I'm also the [Real Estate Advocate](#) and founder of [eRealEstate.com](#), a social network for real estate investors and professionals.

If you have any questions about converting social marketing into real estate closings, please send an email to [ross@erealestate.com](mailto:ross@erealestate.com) or visit <http://socialmediaforrealestatepros.com>.

**Hit that send button right now** and I'll respond to you as soon as possible.

