

# Mobile Marketing for Real Estate Guide



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## MOBILE MARKETING FOR REAL ESTATE GUIDE

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Mobile Marketing Guide for Real Estate

[Ross Hair](#)

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## Mobile Marketing for Real Estate Guide

The Mobile Marketing for Real Estate Guide is designed to help you understand the essential steps you need to take to become a successful mobile marketer. It's a beginner guide but it will give you a great overview of the mobile marketing opportunities that you can incorporate into your real estate marketing plan.

Here are a few resources you can use for more information:

[www.smmcamp.com/blog](http://www.smmcamp.com/blog)

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

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

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

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

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

[www.real-techguy.com](http://www.real-techguy.com)

### 1 - An Overview of Mobile Marketing

The mobile marketing industry is growing at an exceptional rate. We are not too far away from the day when your mobile device will be your primary communication, productivity and entertainment tool.

You can already see the convergence of the phone with your pda, camera and music center. Now a large percentage of people access email and the internet through smart phones and are starting to use their phones to view TV and movies.

It's not going to stop there so the sooner you start thinking about mobile marketing the better.

In particular I want you to think about what your client wants from their mobile device. Do they want instant information, video or virtual tours, easy search from their phone etc.?

#### **To Mobile or Not to Mobile?**

Here's the central question behind this guide – should I incorporate mobile marketing into my real estate business?

The answer seems obvious when you look at the stats showing the growth in mobile usage and applications but you need to make your own decision.

The first thing you need to know is that you're already a mobile marketer. You've been doing it for years using the most common feature of your mobile phone – your phone number.

When you put your phone number on your business card or a yard sign you're engaging in mobile marketing. When you call a foreclosure list, an expired listing or follow up with a visitor to your open house you're engaging in mobile marketing.

So should you incorporate mobile marketing into your real estate business?

The first potential answer is "no".

What if you just ignore mobile marketing and carry on with business as usual. Can you close enough business and completely ignore mobile marketing?

The second answer is "everything".

What if you take the plunge and completely immerse yourself in mobile marketing. My goal is to get ahead of the curve and then use this advantage to close more business as mobile usage increases amongst my clients. It makes me think of the Robert Frost poem about the acorn suspended in mid-air waiting for the oak tree to grow taller.

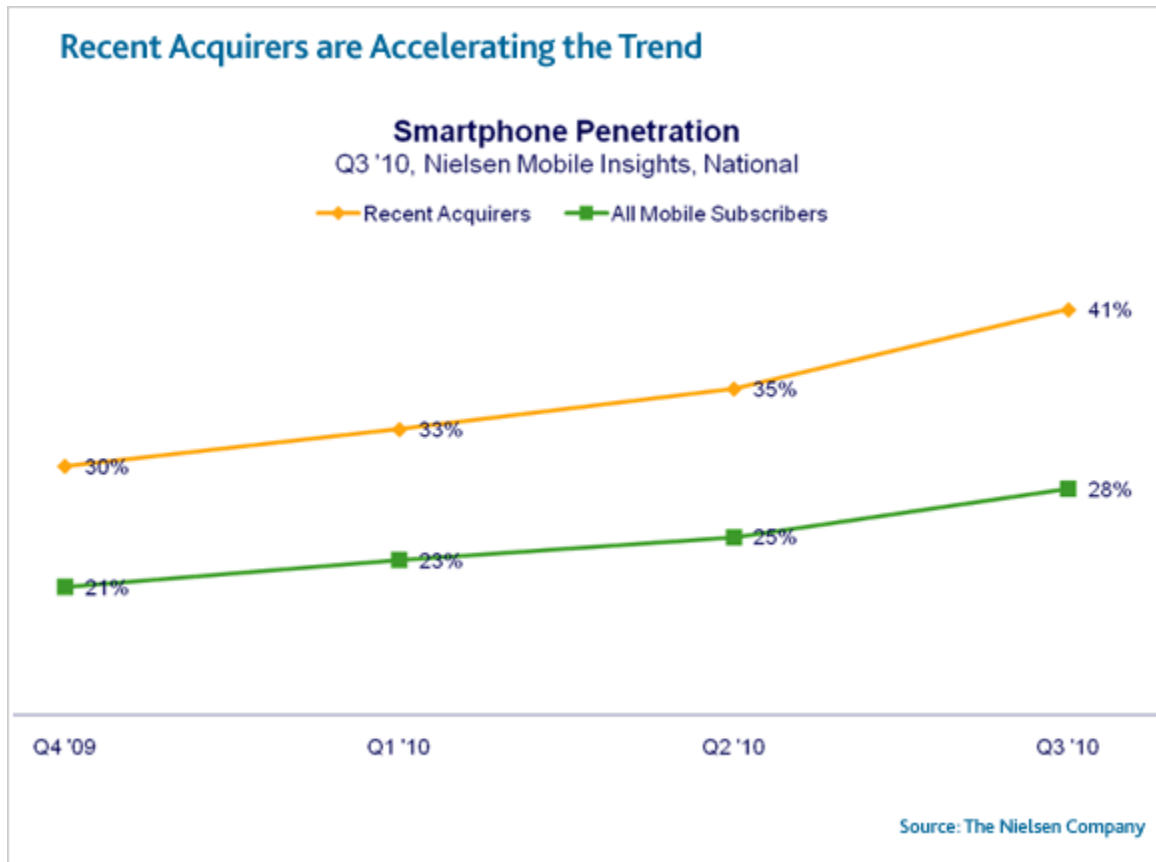
The point I want you to remember is that technology is meant to simplify your life. You should only do the things that make it easier to close more real estate business.

Finally, don't forget that your primary business is real estate and not being a mobile technology super geek. Don't get lost in the technology at the expense of working your business.

## **2 - The US Smart Phone Market**

The first thing we need to know is how many people use smartphones like the iPhone or Android and smart devices like the iPad.

Nielsen reports that in the third quarter of 2010 over 28% of all phones in the United States were smartphones and that over 41% of new phone purchases were smartphones.



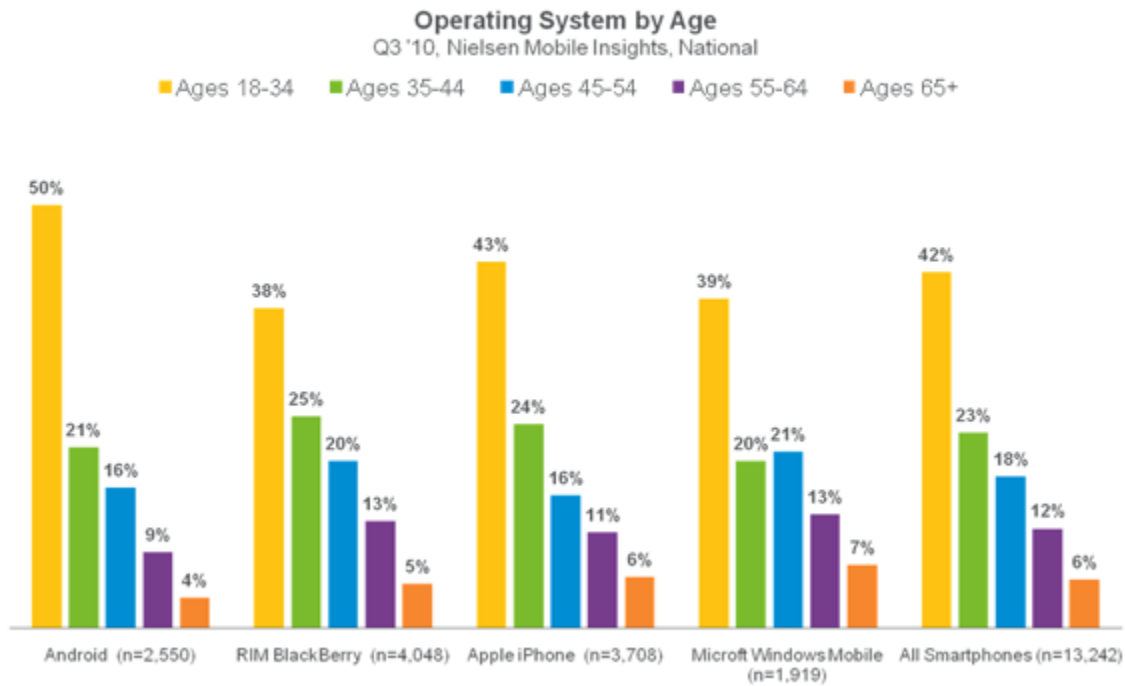
So what does the data mean?

It means that there is rapid uptake in cell phone usage and you need to start thinking about your mobile marketing. In just a few years from now more than half your clients will have smart phones and will expect to receive real estate information on those smart phones.

I was genuinely surprised by this number as it was much higher than I expected. I have coffee once a week with a bunch of 70 year old retired curmudgeons (LOL – don't tell them I said that) and they all have 10 year old phones that flip open. They use their phones to send and receive calls and forward funny emails and wouldn't dream of wasting money on a smart phone and don't do "that Facebook thing".

This made me wonder about the age demographics for smartphone users.

## Fifty percent of Android owners are under the age of 35



Source: The Nielsen Company

The intelligence that I get from the data is that age is a factor when it comes to smart phone use. The older your target demographic the less likely your client is to use a smart phone. If you market 55+ Active Adult communities or second homes in quiet rural areas you may have less need to be a mobile marketer, but if your rent apartments in a hip downtown area you had better be a mobile rock star.

### Which Phone Should I Get?

This is the first question I get from real estate professionals considering purchasing a smart phone.



Here's my answer (in order of preference):

1. iPhone
2. Android (if you can't afford the iPhone)
3. Blackberry

iPhone has the best apps, coolest features and easiest navigation tools but the Android platform is cheaper and is catching up to the iPhone.

The Black Berry has really fallen behind in the smart phone race. It was the most awesome email tool but it had a terrible web interface. I reluctantly made the switch 2-years ago and really haven't had a moment's regret.

Now don't get mad at me if you love your Crack Berry!

#### **4 - Convergence of Technologies**

The rise of the smartphone came about through the convergence of technologies. A phone is no longer just a phone – it's a phone, PDA, email manager, web browser, music play, camera, video recorder, book reader and even a TV.

Right now mobile phones are limited by slow data connections and limited functionality (when compared to a desktop computer or laptop).

But the world is a 'changing.

You and your customer may not replace your existing technologies (like the TV or desktop) with a smartphone but at the very least you will use a smartphone to access just about every technology.

My feeling is you need to start right now and invest yourself in learning and adopting mobile technology

## 5 - Voice

Making and receiving a phone call is extremely easy and already a daily part of our lives. Almost all clients have mobile phones and are comfortable talking on the phone – and they don't need a smartphone to send and receive calls.

That's 300 million mobile subscribers in the U.S. alone who are "talk ready".

It's really easy for a client to see your yard sign or online ad and phone you on your mobile number. Every yard sign has a phone number and every buyer knows how to make a phone call.

I don't need to go into any detail here as you already know the power of your phone. The only thing that I want you to think about is new voice blast technology that allows you to send a recorded message to a call list.

## 6 – Automated Voice Recordings

Automated voice recording (AVR) systems or call capture systems are the most commonly used mobile marketing system in the real estate industry. In my area it is not unusual to see a yard sign with a phone number and code for recorded and automated information.



The advantages are that the information is available 24/7 for the cost of a call (nothing, especially if it's a 1-800 number). Many buyers also enjoy *not speaking to a person* as they just want the information.

There's no shortage of automated call capture services.

The key is that you must use a service that optimizes your chances of converting the caller into a customer. Essential features include the ability to capture the caller's number, to send information in multiple formats (like text, MMS and email) and to be instantly connected to a live agent (that means you).

This kind of service is relatively cheap and top producers swear by its effectiveness and ability to capture new business. Real estate investors have been using call capture systems for ages (think about all those ugly yellow We Buy Houses signs at busy intersections).

[www.kall8.com](http://www.kall8.com)

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



A huge advantage of SMS (and MMS) is that almost every phone is SMS enabled. That means you have the ability to deliver a message to over 300 million mobile subscribers in the U.S.

The service is also immediate as you can text a message and instantly and automatically get a reply with the information that you requested. This means you don't need to call a number and leave a message for information or knock on the door and hope the owner is home (or wait for the Realtor to come to the house).

Then, if you're using a quality service, you can instantly send or get notification of price reductions etc. as the service can add you to a mobile alert list.

SMS allows for 24 / 7 lead capture that you can receive by text or email on your mobile device. It allows you to instantly connect with the prospect at the exact time they are looking at a home. This immediacy is extremely powerful and effective.

The home buyer has always been mobile and drives neighborhoods to look at listings.

One of the biggest issues is that the buyer is standing in front of the listing agents sign and has the listing agent's contact details. This means that the buyer will probably call the listing agent and the listing agent is trained to capture both the buyer and seller side commissions.

## **Resources**

[www.kall8.com](http://www.kall8.com)

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

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

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

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

## **8 - QR Codes**

A QR code is a quick response code that looks like a rectangular bar code and contains encoded data. The data can be a URL, text or other information and needs to be scanned and read by a QR code reader.

The idea behind the use of QR codes is that you scan or take a picture of the bar code with your smartphone camera and then use a QR Code reader to view the encoded information.

The key to a QR code is that allows the storage of data in a 2-D format and is an improvement on the traditional 1-D bar code.



You can generate your own QR code for an URL, phone number or text at <http://qrcodes.kaywa.com>.

QR-CODE GENERATOR

Content type:

URL  Text  Phone Number  SMS

Content:

URL:  
http/

Size: L

Generate!

Here's my QR code for my blog at [www.RossHair.com](http://www.RossHair.com).



Scan it with your smartphone and take a look at the information on the code.

You can also add QR Codes to your business cards and all your real estate marketing. Take a look at how Mike Bowler uses QR codes as a profile picture for his social media accounts.



You can also attach a QR code rider or decal to your yard signs or print a QR code on your brochures that you put in the brochure box. Here's an example of a QR code decal –

### QR Code Signs



I had one nagging problem with QR codes.

I understand the principle that a QR code is just a bar code that allows you to identify and access data. The part that troubles me is that I had to jump through too many hoops to get information from a QR code.

First I need a smartphone with a camera, then I need an app that reads QR codes, then I need to scan the QR code (not as easy as it seems) and have the app identify the QR code and finally, I need to receive the information on my phone.

I have the same hassles producing the codes for my listings.

First I need a QR code provider and then I need to load the data and generate a QR code. Then I need to reproduce the code on my marketing material (without messing it up) and then I need to wait for a client smart enough to understand how to read a QR code.

I was willing to invest the time to work out how to use QR Codes – and now I love them. I just wonder if my clients are willing to jump through the same hoops.

### **QR Code Readers and Apps**

QR Reader by [Kaywa](#)

QR Reader for iPhone by [Tap Media](#)

Quick Mark Code by [Droid X](#)

[Goo.gl](#) URL Shortener and QR Code generator

### **9- Email**

Things start to get more technical when you introduce email as there is considerably more technology involved and you need a smartphone to send and receive email.

The advantage of email is that you can include a great deal of information and you can attach multimedia like documents, photos, audio and video.

I read 90% of my email on my smartphone as it is something you can do at any time and anywhere with cell coverage.

There are a number of things that you should do by email.

The first is to receive documents and attachments that you can open and read with a document productivity app like Documents to Go.

The second is to electronically sign documents on your smart phone or tablet / iPad. Think how powerful and efficient this is when you're at a listing presentation or preparing to take and offer for a home.

One other way to use email is to send and receive email alerts, especially automated alerts. Your clients want to be informed when there is a price drop or a brand new listing in their target area.

Most real estate professionals don't use email managers to send mass email blasts – but every internet marketer uses email as their primary marketing tool. You absolutely need to build your own prospect lists and start mass emailing the list on a regular basis.

### **Resources**

[Google](#) has a full "cloud" product suite plus applications to use on a smartphone

[DocuSign](#) – to electronically sign and send documents (including real estate contracts)

Documents to Go [by Data Viz](#)

[Constant Contact](#) email manager and broadcaster

## **10 - Mobile Web Browsing**

One of the major mobile applications is the web browser. The web browser allows us to search and surf the internet from our mobile phones.

Not all smart phones can surf the internet and not all websites can be viewed on smartphones.

Web browsing from your mobile phone is awesome. I use my phone to go online every day and access all my social network accounts, check website stats and gather information.

One limitation is that my mobile internet connection is slower than my computer and can't handle large files or certain types of websites (especially flash). It reminds me of the early modem days when you would wait for a page to load. I find the same problem with my iPad.

Web browsing is also only available on smartphones and requires a data plan (expensive).

## **Mobile Real Estate Search**

Mobile search is a large piece of mobile marketing. You can use mobile search to instantly get local listing details and your customer will use mobile search to do their own homework about homes for sale.

The large listing aggregator site, like Zillow and Trulia, have created excellent search apps that allow you to view listings in a mobile ready format on your smart phone. The one problem they have is that their data source is notoriously unreliable but it is improving all the time.

If you really want to be cool you can develop your own smart phone app to search listings. Here's an app that [Charles Marunde](#) developed for his real estate business in Sequim, Washington.



Another tool that you can use is Google Maps and in particular Google Walk About and [Google Street View](#). It's a great way to tour a local neighborhood.

### **Resources**

[Realtor.com](#)

[Zillow](#)

[Trulia](#)

[Owlio](#) – Owlio is a discount real estate search engine that analyzes every listing through a desktop appraisal system to find the best deals.

[Google Maps](#)

### **Your Local MLS**

Your local MLS may have created its own real estate search app that allows you to view the public data on the MLS website. The huge advantage of this is that the listing data is far better than the data you find on Zillow etc. as it is the raw MLS data. Services like Zillow don't always get MLS data and often use less reliable sources like County records etc.

### **Mobile Ready Website**

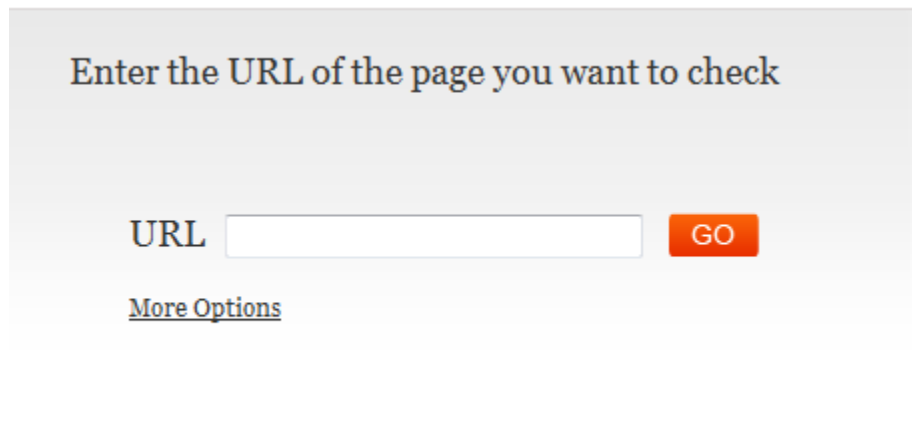
Most real estate professionals have a listing website (IDX) and a blog. Your IDX provider should have the technical expertise to make IDX search available on smartphones. If your IDX provider doesn't provide a mobile ready search you need to change your provider.

The problem is usually your personal blog.

Fortunately there is a really simple solution if you have a WordPress blog. Just add a plug in called [WP Mobile Plugin](#). The plugin will convert check to see if your visitor is using a mobile device and will display your blog in the most compatible mode.

Another big red flag is if you have a custom website that uses flash. It drives me crazy but the iPhone doesn't support flash (what's that all about?) so your beautiful flash website will publish as a blank screen.

You can use a service like [Mobi Ready](#) to test the mobile readiness of your site.



Enter the URL of the page you want to check

URL  [GO](#)

[More Options](#)

## Resources

[WP Mobile plugin](#)

[Ready Mobi](#)

## Syndicate Your Listings

If you don't have a huge budget to make your websites mobile ready then you can piggy back of a number of website providers that offer cheap monthly rates.

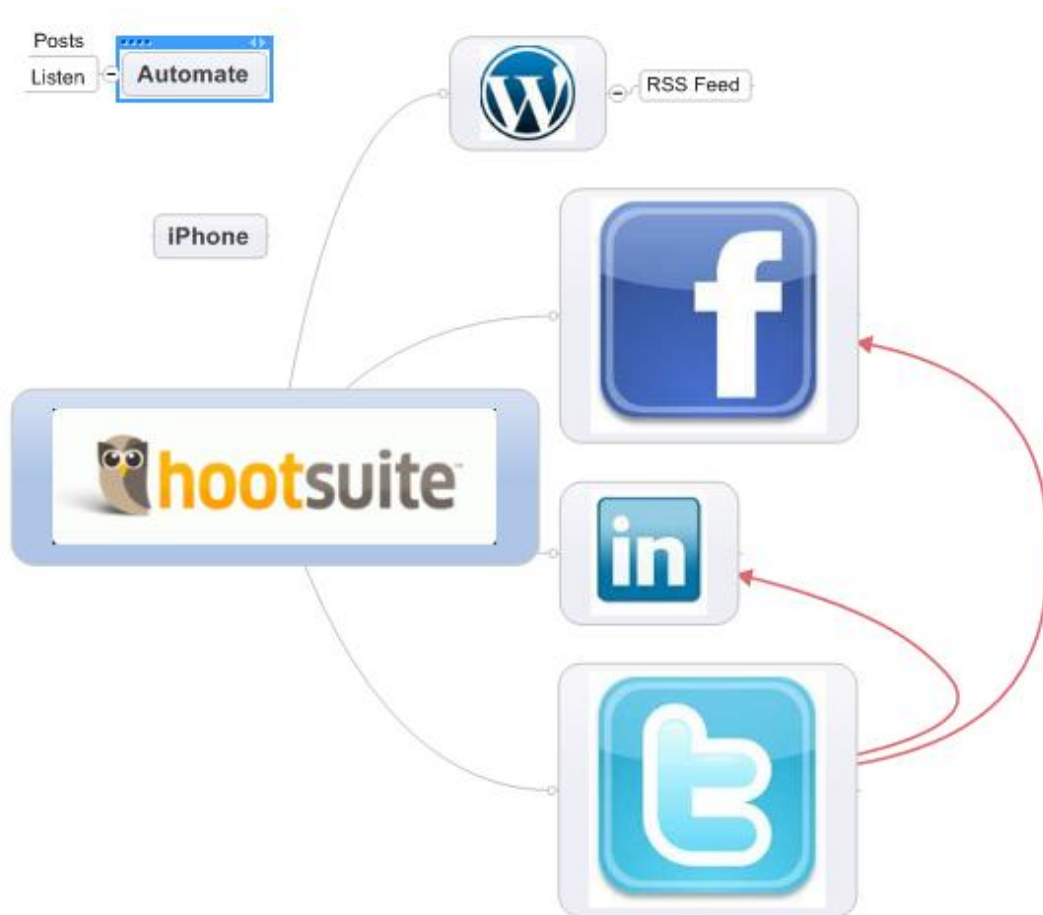
Take a look at providers like [Point2](#) and [A la Mode](#) as they offer mobile ready sites and they will syndicate your listings to all the major real estate search sites like Zillow and Trulia. Syndicating your listings makes sense as it allows you to expand the number of eyeballs on your listings.

## Social Media Dashboards

I use my smart phone every day to access and manage all my social media accounts, including my blogs. I view, post and comment primarily from my phone so I can stay in touch and immediately act on a buying or selling signal I get from a prospective client.

The service I use to manage my social media accounts is [HootSuite](#). It's a lifesaver and if you do nothing else you must download the free HootSuite app and start managing your social media accounts from your phone.

You can get individual apps for every major social network but using HootSuite creates a single dashboard for every account.



## Resources

[HootSuite](#)

[You Tube app](#)

## **Location Based Services**

Location based services use GPS to search and view information based on your physical location. The relevance to real estate marketing is that buyers and sellers can find you based on a location search for local real estate agents.

Now if you couple this with a review service (like Yelp) you can start to see how consumers are changing the way they search for local agents.

## **Resources**

[Four Square](#)

[Facebook Places](#)

[Yelp](#)

## **11 - Video Marketing**

I'm most intrigued by the opportunities to video market with your smart phone.

The newest smartphones have improved HD quality video and simple video editing applications like iMovie for the iPhone.

Some ideas:

Create a local neighborhood video

Do an Open House video

Stream an Open House together with an invite to come to the house or interact with the agent.

Post video of local events to your social media accounts

Create mobile ready virtual tours

## **Video Resources**

[iMovie App](#) – It cost around \$5 to buy the app but you can create simple virtual tours by merging photos and video clips.

[You Tube App](#) – get the You Tube app as it makes it really easy to auto post your videos to your You Tube account and then syndicate to social media sites etc.

## **12 – Voice, SMS and Email Blasts**

A new innovation is voice blasts that allow you to send a recorded message to a telephone list or let you connect with a live person. The key is that there is mass communication and auto dial functionality.

Be careful with this technology and beware of Do Not call lists etc. I mention it because internet marketers have greatly increased sales and webinar attendance rates by using voice blast system.

The same applies to SMS blasts.

You probably already have the ability to send a SMS or MMS to a client. All you need to do is type up the text, enter your client's phone number and send the text. The obvious problem is that this is a slow and labor intensive process so you need to find a more efficient way to mass communicate with all your clients.

There's no shortage of SMS service providers who can help you set up a SMS campaign.

One critical consideration is who bears the cost of the SMS. In most cases it costs to receive an SMS – and this is a sure fire way to make a recipient mad if he doesn't have a SMS plan.

### **13 - Mobile Advertising**

Mobile Ad spend is on the rise with an estimated \$743 million in sales in 2011. The rise in mobile ads is directly related to the growth in the number of people with smart phones.

This is where things get really interesting. I think mobile marketing is going to be awesome.

First let me say that the most effective form of online marketing is PPC (pay per click). It has the best ROI and is an extremely powerful marketing channel. All my internet marketing friends agree that it is the best marketing tool and kicks SEO, Blogging etc. in the behind.

The complication is that it is expensive and there's a steep learning curve.

Mobile advertising is the same (except rates are much lower than on the internet).

Imaging how effective it is for someone to see your ad on their cell phone at the same time they are browsing a real estate search site or reading information about buying a new home?

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**US Mobile Ad Spending, 2009-2014**  
millions and % change

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Note: includes display (banner, rich media and video), search and messaging-based advertising  
Source: eMarketer, Sep 2010

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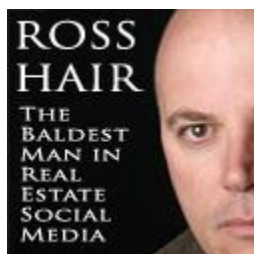
www.eMarketer.com

## Summary

I trust that the Mobile Marketing for Real Estate Guide helped you get a feel for the future of mobile marketing and how it can help you buy and sell homes.

**Ross Hair**

[SMMCamp \(Social Media Marketing Camp\)](#)



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Connect with me on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/rosshair](http://www.twitter.com/rosshair)

## Mobile Budget

Technology costs money so you need to create a mobile budget to see if mobile marketing is cost effective.

### Smartphone

iPhone

Android

Blackberry

HTC

### Mobile Subscription Plan

AT&T

Verizon

Sprint

Cricket

### Text Package

Unlimited Text

### Data Package

Unlimited Data

### Recorded Message Service

### Text on Demand Service

### Voice Blasts

### SMS Blast

### Email Blast

### Mobile Ads

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**Total**