

Building a
**VALUABLE
REAL ESTATE
BRAND**



www.PipelineROI.com | 1-866-300-1550



What makes a memorable real estate brand?

Think about all of the real estate companies you've interacted with recently. Whether it was browsing through websites, speaking with others at a convention, or scrolling through social media. Now think of a few people or companies that really stood out.

Why is that? It may be because they had a well-designed website, thousands of Twitter followers, or a nicely branded business card they handed you. But if you sum all that up, what really makes a real estate company stand out is a memorable brand.

“

*Your brand is **what people say about you** when you're not in the room.”*

Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon

How can you achieve that?

Whether you're a brand new broker or have been in the business for years and are looking for a re-vamp, this guide will take you through the steps needed to build a memorable and valuable brand that will give you a leg up on the competition, and help draw more leads in for you and your agents.



Knowing your customers

One of the biggest mistakes a real estate company can make is building a brand before they know their target audience. If you create a brand suited for marketing to suburban, high-end home buyers when you're based in a low-income rural area, well... you're not off to a great start. Finding your ideal customers and creating your look and feel around their likes and wants is the first step in building a memorable brand.

“

*Personas will help you identify your audience and better solve their problems. And when you solve their problems, **everyone wins.**”*

Kevan Lee, Buffer

How to define them

Your specific agents will likely have slightly varying client personas, but as a whole you should have a general set of buyers and sellers that you cater to. This can be defined by area, price point, income, family size, and type of property. Depending on the size of your company, you could serve 2 client personas or 10. If you have no clue who you should be marketing to, start by checking out our [Buyer Persona Template](#). This walks you through the process of identifying your market.



Defining your culture

Availability

Once you know who your agents will be marketing to, you can start working on your internal values and beliefs that will set the standard for hiring agents to build your team. Here are some of the most important factors to decide for your brokerage, and embed into your hiring decisions, office policy manual, onboarding process, and continual training.

What do you expect from your agents? As the broker, you may be the one in charge of routing leads, and that also means you set the standard for how and how quickly your agents respond to these leads.

Do you expect your agents to respond to leads within 5 minutes or 5 hours? This may not seem like an important rule to set, but it can often be the subject of disagreement between agents. Simply saying agents should respond to leads “quickly” isn’t enough. Set the standard early, so agents joining your team know exactly what’s expected.

Here’s an example of a clear standard of availability that could be included in a company handbook:

“We put out marketing to draw in leads for our agents, and for that reason we expect agents to respect and nurture those leads to continue to grow the company. During a normal working week, leads are routed from 8 AM – 6 PM, 7 days a week (excluding Sunday, which is 12-6). During these hours, we expect agents to respond within 15 minutes. Remember, the sooner you respond to a lead, the more likely you are to close it. If you’re on vacation or temporarily unable to promptly respond to leads, you can elect to be excluded from receiving these lead notifications for the time being.”



Communication

How often do you expect to be updated on the status of a lead? There are two types of managers: hands on and hands off. As your company's broker, you have to decide which you're going to be when it comes to lead updates and staying in the loop on transactions.

This is likely impacted some by the size of your office. If you have 100 agents, you're probably less hands on than a broker with 3 agents. No matter what your communication expectations, you have to do 2 things to make sure your agents are able to meet them.

Set the standard

Make it clear when interviewing, hiring, and onboarding new agents how frequently leads need to be updated, and how you want them to communicate. Be specific.

Make it easy

Sending manual e-mails with status updates is far from convenient. Look for a lead management or CRM system that makes it easy for your agents to update leads, and you'll see better results.



Your mission statement, values, or belief system

Nearly every business, big or small, has a sentence or set of statements that defines their company goals and beliefs. These words probably won't appear in every single marketing piece or advertisement you run, but they're the driving force behind your messages and actions. Ideally, every person in the company should know and practice what's lined out in your mission statement.

“

*Your premium brand had better be delivering something special, or it's **not going to get the business.**”*

Warren Buffett

A good mission statement is one that's easy to understand, and communicates not only your goals, but how your company approaches reaching those goals.

Bad example:

“Guided by relentless focus on our five imperatives, we will constantly strive to implement the critical initiatives required to achieve our vision. In doing this, we will deliver operational excellence in every corner of the company and meet or exceed our commitments to the many constituencies we serve.”

Good example:

“Metro Properties Real Estate agents use local market expertise, combined with the best technology to help make the buying or selling process smooth and successful for all our clients. Above all, we treat others the way we'd like to be treated, and promise honesty and ethical behavior, always.”



Creating your look

Once you've defined your target customer and ideal team member qualities, you can start to build out your brand appearance to market yourself to those people. As the broker, you set the standard for how your brand appears, so you can control how consistent you appear to your audience.

Think about how large scale brands market themselves. You don't see every Coca-Cola ad using a different logo, different colors, or catch phrases. Even on a smaller scale, consistency counts. Here are some important brand aspects that every broker can decide and make standard for their agents to use.

Logo

One thing that should appear consistently between your site, your agents' sites, social media channels, business cards, and basically anything with your name on it, is your company logo. If you don't have one, get one. There are several options out there to get a professionally designed logo.

If you know any local graphic designers, start with them. Remember, every designer is different. Look through their website or portfolio to see if they have a style you'd like to showcase with your brand. Keep in mind that having a logo designed won't be cheap, but if you think about how many times you'll be using it, would you really want a cheap one anyway?

If you don't know any designers, or can't find the style you're looking for, there are several online options for hiring freelance graphic designers. Sites like [99 Designs](#), [CrowdStudio](#), and many other "crowdfunding" style sites allow you to receive several designs to choose from and may be cheaper than using a local designer. However, the revision process may be more difficult, so it's not always the best option for everyone.



Company e-mail

A company e-mail domain is another opportunity to promote your brand name. Rather than your agents sending e-mails from @gmail.com, they will come from @yourcompany.com. Company e-mail is simple to set up and affordable to use. There are several options for hosting branded e-mail, but Google is the most common. Their plans start at just over \$4/month per user.

How to set it up

If you're interested in using Google for hosting your branded company e-mail, [this page](#) will walk you through the setup and answer any questions you might have along the way.

E-mail signatures

Have you ever received an e-mail from someone in real estate that had a 25 line signature with multiple logos, and links to every social network, website page, and contact number they've ever had? An e-mail signature should be no more than a few lines, including only the most important contact information and links.

As a broker, you can set up a standard signature for your office to use. This will ensure that regardless of who a potential client is speaking with from your team, they won't have to scroll for minutes just to find a phone number.



Company description

If you have 25 agents working for you, there shouldn't be 25 company descriptions floating around on all of their websites and LinkedIn profiles. Writing up a standard company description that can be pasted into any "About Us" section can give your brand some consistency.

“

Your personal brand is a promise to your clients... a promise of quality, consistency, competency, and reliability.”

Jason Hartman, real estate investor

What to include

Your company description is a short set of sentences that briefly tells a website visitor who you are, what you believe in, and what you offer them that stands out from anyone else in your field. It's similar to your mission statement, but includes more information. Be sure and include these points in your company description:

- Official company name
- Owners or managers associated with the company
- Where the company is located
- When and where the business was founded
- How the company has grown
- What you uniquely bring to your area and field



Social media branding

Social media is the place where marketing gets personal. As a broker, you should encourage your agents to utilize their own social media, and you should set the example by setting up and maintaining company social media profiles as well.

If you don't have time to maintain multiple social media channels, consider hiring a marketing assistant to take on the work. Social media is a popular career path for many millennials, so you can likely find some in your area who are looking to gain experience.

Once you decide who will manage your company's social networks, you'll need to think of content to share. The best real estate company social media channels promote content from individual agents, while also creating an overall feel for living in the area. Here are some ideas of what to share on your company page:

- Pictures from your agents' closings
- Company events and parties
- Local events
- Eye-catching listings
- Articles about local businesses
- Local home pricing trends
- Blog posts written by your agents
- Helpful content for potential clients (eBooks, etc.)



Social media and your agents

If you expect your agents to become fluent in social media, it's smart to set them up with the basics to be successful. For starters, set up a policy for your employees to follow if they use social media professionally. These don't need to be strict rules, but rather guidelines that will protect your company's reputation while promoting the brand. Here are some ideas:

Use of the company name and logo. For example, if an agent chooses to use the company name in their Twitter bio, they're responsible for keeping up a professional profile. You may also choose to have agents agree up front that they will remove the logo after they leave the company.

What is and is not acceptable language or topics of discussion on a professional page. This doesn't just apply to foul language. You may choose to prevent agents from speaking negatively of clients or potential clients in general. Sounds obvious, right? Unfortunately, with social media it's easy to Tweet out frustrations without thinking. Set the standard for your agents to avoid this.

How to maintain compliance with local and national policies. This will vary based on your state's laws, but can affect what information your agents are allowed to share on social media.

You should also incorporate social media training into your onboarding and continuing education training for your agents. Keeping them informed and on top of the latest tools and trends will mean they're more likely to get involved. We have a great intro to social media eBook that your agents can [check out for free](#).



Website design

Your brokerage website and your individual agents' websites are often a potential client's first impression of your company. The design, usability, and features of these websites can often be the difference between a visitor coming back again or clicking away from the home page.

“

There are three responses to a piece of design — yes, no, and WOW! Wow is the one to aim for.”

Milton Glaser, Graphic Designer

Company website

Think of your website as the online face of your company, promoting your brand and your agents 24/7/365. Here's a short checklist of what your company website should include:

A mobile-responsive theme — With Google's continuing algorithm updates, mobile-responsive themes are more important than ever. A non-responsive theme can negatively affect your search engine rankings and web traffic.

“About Us” page — This should include your company description, contact information, and mission statement.

“Our Agents” page — include your agents' headshots, contact information, website link, and you can even include some special skills or a short bio of the agent. This helps humanize your real estate brand and makes your site more personal.



Training to fit your culture

Onboarding

Potential clients are just as likely to interact with your brand through one of your agents as they are to come across your brand online. For this reason, it's important to think of everyone in your company as a representation of your brand, and give them the best training to effectively represent your company.

Whether you hire a brand-new agent or a veteran, you can't expect them to read your office policy manual and instantly understand and fit your culture and expectations. As a broker, it's your responsibility to decide the first things you want your agents to learn, and how you're going to teach them. This can be done through a mentorship system, or classroom style sessions led by your agents or experts outside of the office.

“

*The only thing worse than training employees and losing them is to **not train them and keep them.**”*

Zig Ziglar

Continual training

Training shouldn't stop with new agents. Even veterans can use a refresher from time to time on culture, education, and new technology and marketing ideas. Nurturing even your veteran agents and keeping them up to speed with smart training can help keep them long-term.



Maintaining your brand

Performing a brand audit

Building your brand isn't a "set it and forget it" process. Your real estate brand will change and grow with every new agent you take on and deal you close. It's important to keep up with the real world perception of your brand.

There are a few ways to monitor how your brand is perceived. Here are a few methods to try:

Follow up with past clients — After your agents have closed the deal and (hopefully) received a glowing testimonial from their buyers or sellers, you can check in with the client to see how they perceive the company after working with you. Try setting up an e-mail to go out to past clients that asks these questions:

1. What 3 words come to mind when you think of (Company Name)?
2. How would you describe (Company Name) to your friends and family?

Monitor your presence online — Online review sites and social media have made it possible to glorify or destroy a company in just a few minutes. Try [setting up a Google Alert](#) for your company name to see how you're being mentioned online. You should also check in on your business page on review sites like Yelp and Google+ for mentions.

By keeping tabs on your brand, you'll be able to ensure your real estate company is in the best position to expand. With a solid brand, and a system that scales, the sky is the limit for how big your company can grow.



The most effective inbound marketing platform for brokers *and* agents.



The Pipeline ROI platform allows you to manage your website, social media, drip e-mail marketing, lead management, and more - all in one place, for one low price. Whether you're an office of 5 or 500, Pipeline ROI can help you generate, nurture, and close more leads through inbound marketing tactics.



www.PipelineROI.com | 1-866-300-1550

FIND OUT MORE