

Commercial Real Estate
Marketing
Playbook



SHARPLAUNCH

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Introduction

Introduction

If you're reading this, chances are that you're a CRE professional that understands that traditional marketing methods are becoming more expensive and less effective and competition in commercial real estate marketing is continually increasing.

So, how can you differentiate? How can you elevate your business through modern marketing strategies?

The Commercial Real Estate Marketing Playbook was created to help you devise and execute a successful marketing strategy for your commercial properties with actionable tips and insights.

We cover how to define your ideal customer profile, develop your marketing strategy, build and optimize your online presence and measure success with effective metrics.

By following this guide, you will be able to create a more effective plan to help improve your leasing and investment sales efforts for the rapidly evolving digital age.



2

Getting ready

Define your ideal customer

The first step for any effective marketing plan is to make sure you cover the basics.

This means before you move forward with any execution, you need to have a clear understanding of your plan of attack and know who your target audience is.

Every property has an **ideal customer profile**. Whether a large mixed-use property or a small retail space, it's important to define who your priority customer is.

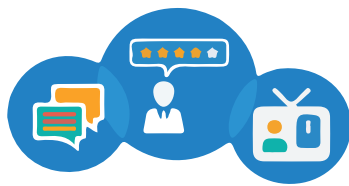
Below is an example of a simple table that you could use to help you define details of the customer profile that you want to target.

Client Criteria We Want	Why?
Technology tenants	We want to position the building as a key technology property in the epicenter of a thriving innovation district
10-100 employees	Our clients should be large enough to need and afford the floor plans currently available at the property
Investor funding	Our best tenants are well-funded companies that have been operational for at least 2-3 years
Internet-based companies	We have better luck serving needs of fast-growing internet companies that usually are looking to sign leases quickly and don't have complex TI/build-out requirements
30-something professionals	The neighborhood has become very trendy and offers many amenities that are attractive for 30 something professionals

Develop a marketing strategy

A healthy commercial real estate marketing strategy should have a **well-balanced marketing mix** and leverage Earned, Paid and Owned media.

This is a framework that can help you set an effective strategy and a good starting point to think about how to organize your marketing efforts in the context of various channels.



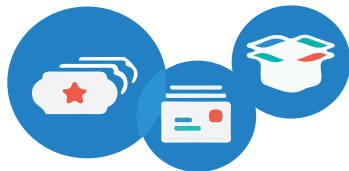
Earned Media

Includes marketing activities that you typically “earn” by advocates of your brand and include free channels such as SEO, Social Media.



Paid Media

Refers to any performance-based channels or paid advertising like cost-per-click, banners, remarketing and paid promotions.



Owned Media

Typically includes your own media assets such as your websites, blogs, social media profiles and email marketing lists.

This marketing mix should be distributed across different channels to help mitigate any downside risk in the case things don't work in a specific marketing area.

For example, if your Owned Media proves to be ineffective, then you have other activities that can help pick up the slack.



FURTHER READING

[How to Build a Commercial Real Estate Marketing Strategy](#)

Get professional property photos

High quality photos of your property are by far the best marketing investment you can make.

Why?

Because good quality photos can be used across many different marketing touch points including: your website, brochures, flyers, offering memorandums, advertisements, listing portals, etc.

Photos of your property are the **first critical impact** that can make a drastic impression for any potential tenant, broker or investor.

In the increasingly competitive CRE marketplace, it can give you an edge and make a big difference in how quickly it takes to capture initial interest for selling or leasing your property.



Photo by Josh Pabst



FURTHER READING

[Top 10 Tips for CRE Photography](#)

Invest in great copywriting

Strong photography coupled with great copy is a winning combination for any effective property marketing effort.

The written content for your property is key to help communicate the unique selling points and relevant details that can help pique the interest of your prospective clients.

Go the extra mile to craft a well-written description of your property so you don't risk losing the confidence of a potential buyer. Have someone (ideally a professional copywriter) double-check your writing and make sure you avoid these common mistakes:

- Generic, dry and uninteresting copy
- Too wordy
- Grammar mistakes
- Too short
- Spelling mistakes
- Not enough details

Sample property description

University Tower is a 17-story Durham landmark building, offering unique Class A office space with stunning views of Durham and Chapel Hill.

Positioned equal distance between downtown Durham and downtown Chapel Hill, University Tower offers professionals easy access to both "city centers," I-40, Research Triangle Park, and RDU Airport.

Visible from 3 miles away on approach from I-40, the sparkling

emerald colored Tower is seen rising above the pine trees with its tall spire.

Amenities include the exclusive penthouse floor University Club Restaurant, bar, and private dining/meeting rooms, on site professional property management team, (4) high-speed elevators, and new Trane Building Management System.

Floors may be subdivided as needed to accommodate any size business.



FURTHER READING

[**8 Simple Tips to Write Better Property Descriptions**](#)

3

Building your web
presence

Effective property websites

Nearly 80% of investors and tenants begin their commercial real estate search online.

That's why online listings and property websites are more important than ever before, not only for the sales process, but for the ongoing marketing of your properties, especially high profile spaces.

To ensure your property sites are effective at conveying the key benefits of a given property, and attract the right attention, they need to be well organized.

That means:

- High quality content that describes what makes a property unique, detailed building specifications and amenities, and professional photography.
- Easy access to your company with maintenance contact information, property management contact information and company details.
- An easy-to-use interface so visitors can find the information they need fast.

An effective property website introduces, showcases, and guides visitors through the property in detail, and is an immensely powerful tool when built properly.



FURTHER READING

[**The Essential Checklist for Launching an Effective Property Website**](#)

SEO optimization

How your website is built will **directly impact how it ranks** in search engines like Google.

If you want prospects to find your commercial property websites, they need to be well optimized for search engines.

Optimization is a multi-step process, because there are so many factors involved in ranking websites. Google takes into consideration several elements of how a web page is created (on-page factors), including, but not limited to: the the length and detail of the content on your site, the time it takes to load a page, how long users spend on the site before leaving, and overall user experience (UX) of the page.

To optimize your listings in full, you should focus on four key areas:

- Write unique and descriptive content about the property
- Ensure the page loads fast and is not bogged down by heavy files (ex. large photos)
- Craft a descriptive meta description that includes the property name, building type and location
- Write a descriptive page title that includes the property name and location



FURTHER READING

[The Complete Real Estate SEO Guide](#)

Domain name

Before you can build a site, you need a domain name, and that seemingly simple decision can have a big impact.

There are two big decisions you have to make here. Which TLD (top level domain - .COM, .ORG, etc.) you'll buy, and the actual name of the site.

If you're unsure about your TLD, go with a .COM – the most recognizable and universally used on the Internet, but don't overlook new options like .NYC in New York or .REALESTATE and .REALTOR (for NAR members) when they make sense.

For the actual domain name, focus on this:

- Use the property name when possible
- Shorter is better
- KISS - Keep it simple
- Don't hyphenate
- Check for trademarks



FURTHER READING

[How to Find the Perfect Real Estate Domain Name](#)

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Promotional tactics

Google Adwords

Advertising on Google to gain visibility for targeted commercial real estate keywords can be a **very quick and effective way** to generate leads for your property.

Google is still the most dominant platform for marketers, accounting for more than 31% of the global digital advertising market (far ahead of second-place Facebook at 9.6%) with a total of \$52 Billion from Ad revenues in 2015.

Google's Adwords advertising platform can be used for targeting via keywords, managed display placements and remarketing.



Keywords

Keyword-level targeting and bidding, matching the content of your ads to the content of websites.



Display

Choose which specific websites you want to advertise on. You can also pinpoint relevant pages on certain websites.



Remarketing

Reach customers who have shown an interest in your product or service by visiting your site, and show them relevant ads as they browse other sites.



FURTHER READING

[What Are The Most Expensive Commercial Real Estate Keywords?](#)

Email marketing

Even after all these years, email marketing remains one of the most effective and highest ROI tactics online.

People spend a lot of time reading email, and if you can get in front of them with useful, insightful, and timely content, you can capture their attention.

Email isn't easy though. Because people receive so many emails (over 100 on average per day), you need to cut through the chaff and call attention to your content through highly targeted and personalized email messages.

That means:

- Fully optimizing subject lines to be short, personal, and ultimately action-oriented.
- Sending your emails at the right time, when they are less likely to be inundated with messages but still online and checking.
- Segmenting your lists and sending customized messages to people based on their role and past engagement.
- Creating and using a follow up strategy to reach people on your list a second, third or fourth time.



FURTHER READING

[**The Advanced Guide to Commercial Real Estate Email Marketing**](#)

CRE listing sites

To reach the largest audience possible, take advantage of the large number of commercial real estate listing sites online.

These sites offer targeted, searchable databases of properties like yours, sometimes customized by location or property type.

In addition to the biggest directories like CoStar and Xceligent, there are dozens more. Creating a profile on every site that is applicable to your property type and location will allow you to reach the largest possible audience.

Look for listing sites that offer good exposure, manageable costs, and a large enough database that is in regular use by potential tenants.

There are a number of good alternatives with different pricing and advertising options you may want to consider.

- [Rofo](#)
- [Digsy](#)
- [CIMLS](#)

- [42 floors](#)
- [Commercial MLS](#)
- [Spacelist](#)

- [BuzzTarget](#)
- [Showcase](#)
- [OfficeSpace.com](#)

- [SearchOfficeSpace](#)
- [Instant offices](#)
- [Catalist](#)

- [The Square Foot](#)
- [Craigslist](#)
- [CommercialSearch](#)



FURTHER READING

[**The Ultimate Guide to Commercial Real Estate Listing Sites**](#)

Internal assets

It's easy to get caught up in all the shiny tools and platforms out there that let you reach your audience, but what about the internal assets you already have in place?

Don't forget you already have a large address book full of contacts, including people within project teams, press contacts, and tenants you can reach out to at any time.

Here are a few things you can do to promote your listings that require almost no budget:

- Build a list of tenants, project team brokers, architects, and property managers, and segment them for future communications.
- Add property website URLs to your email signature so they are seen by everyone you communicate with.
- Update your blog regularly, both on property websites and your main company website to promote and link to your properties.
- Send a company newsletter to everyone in your list, segmented based on their interests.
- Add your URL to print materials and signage so it's easier for prospects to find and access your property website.



FURTHER READING

[Actionable Property Marketing Ideas to Generate Free Visibility](#)

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Measuring Success

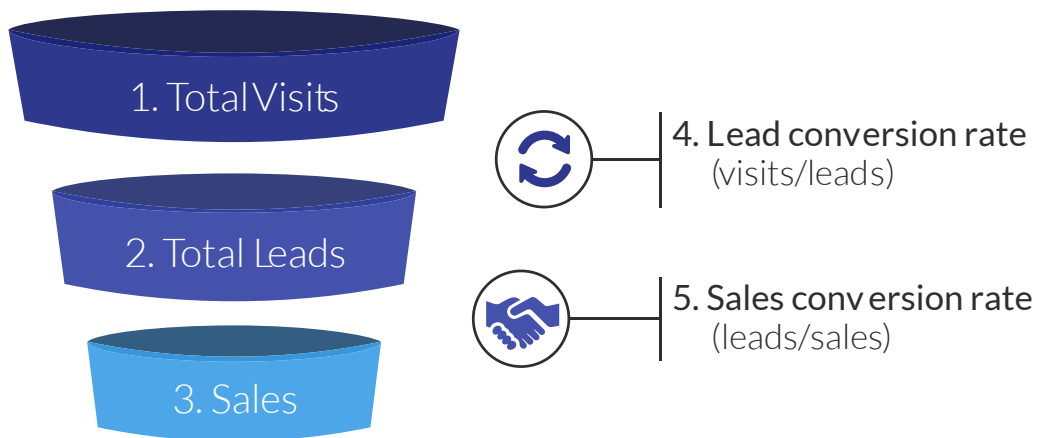
Key metrics

Is any of this working?

This is an important question to ask yourself at every stage of the process.

To ensure your marketing efforts are successful and to track what works and what doesn't, you should establish key metrics for all of your activities.

There are several important metrics you can and should be tracking. To get started, keep a close eye on these eight:



By tracking who is visiting your site, where they come from, how many of them contact you, and how many of those contacts turn into sales, you can get a good sense of what works, what doesn't, and how to allocate your marketing budget in the future.



FURTHER READING

[What is the Value of a Real Estate Lead?](#)

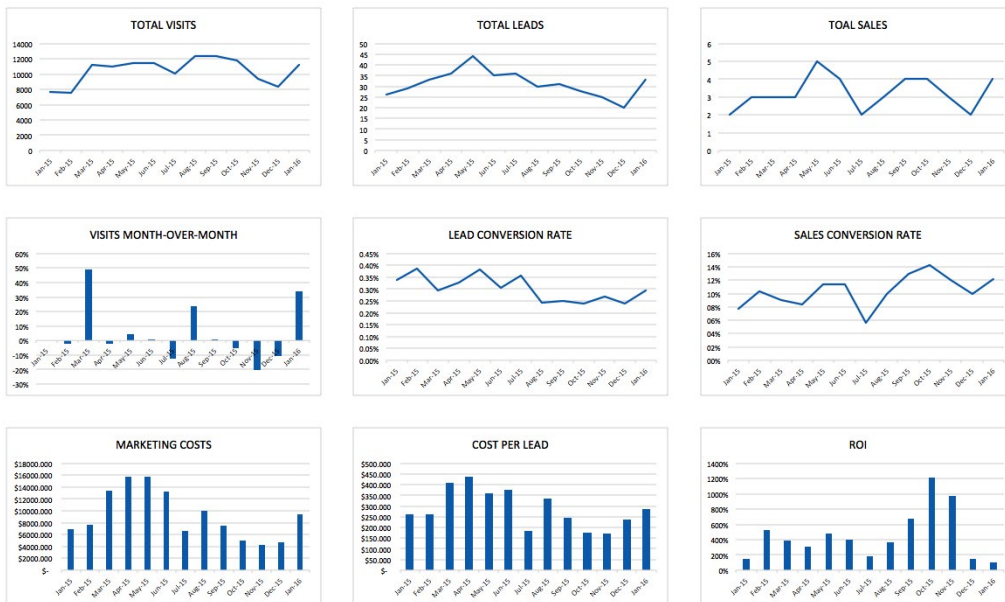
Reporting

All that data can turn into a mess if you don't have a clean, easy to read report outlining what it means.

Something as simple as a spreadsheet that lists each of these metrics on a monthly basis so you can see **how you're performing and measure it against past months** will allow you to track improvement over time.

The goal of a good marketing report is to show in a dashboard view what works and what doesn't. If you're spending money equally on social media advertising, Google paid search, and content for your website, which of those tactics is actually creating new contacts and ultimately sales?

When you have an easy to read report that illustrates the answers to these questions it's much easier to focus your investment and determine how you proceed with your next marketing campaign.



FURTHER READING

[How to Create a Real Estate Marketing Report](#)

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Conclusion

Conclusion

As the CRE industry evolves, traditional marketing methods are getting replaced by more modern digital marketing activities that are much more scalable, cost effective and easier to measure.

An effective commercial real estate marketing strategy includes planning and setting objectives, creating an effective online presence, executing digital marketing tactics, and tracking KPIs to continuously measure success.

With smart use of the tactics in this guide and dedication to a long-term strategy, you'll be able to drive drastically better results (and business impact) for your properties online.



SHARPLAUNCH

Ready to Grow Your Business?

**Learn more about SharpLaunch's
powerful CRE marketing platform and
get a free demo today.**

GET DEMO