The Buyer's Guide to CRE Marketing Software

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The commercial real estate (CRE) industry is in the process of major transformation.

As a recent study explained, "Respondents with modernized systems seem to be breaking from the pack, while those saddled with legacy systems are playing catch-up. For those in the middle, transitioning infrastructure to the cloud is the clear top priority."

That means that your CRE company is at risk of getting left behind as your industry peers continue to adopt technology at a break-neck pace.

> What experts are calling the digital disruption means you need to make changes to increase your online visibility in an increasingly busy digital space.

By adopting new technologies and digital marketing tactics you'll enable potential clients to find your properties online more easily and set yourself apart from the other CRE players in the game.

Fortunately, this can be as simple as making one key adjustment: bringing in a reliable CRE marketing software.

The right CRE marketing software enables you to:

- ⊘ Streamline your processes

- ⊘ Meet your client's expectations

- ⊘ Strengthen your brand and ensure brand consistency

- ⊘ Keep up with leading CRE firms

- ⊘ See an ROI of 5X or greater

If that sounds appealing to you, let's get down to brass tacks.

What is a CRE Marketing Software?

A marketing software encompasses the **tools that help businesses successfully execute campaigns, tap into their target markets, and convert leads into sales.**

In other words, your marketing software should help at three stages:

- ☑ Attracting new prospects

- ☑ Deepening engagement with those prospects

- ☑ Converting them into clients

All this said, there's a big world of marketing software out there. Some companies choose general tools like HubSpot or the Adobe Marketing Cloud.

But if you're in the CRE game, you can save yourself a lot of time (and headache) setting up your software by choosing a solution that's designed specifically to market commercial real estate.

> With a turnkey CRE marketing software, you don't need to be a marketing expert or a technology expert. You get easy-to-use tools tailored to the distinct needs of your industry.

This helps you:

- ☑ Manage and promote your listings

- ☑ Manage leads and your customer relations

- ☑ Get insights on how your digital assets are performing

When to Implement CRE Marketing Software

Is it time for your company to jump in with a software solution?

> 44% of respondents in a recent Deloitte study said they plan to accelerate innovation this year.

To help you figure out if you should be in that category, we've outlined three key questions to ask:

Is your current marketing inefficient?

Tenants and investors want a frictionless experience when they're evaluating your listings. If they have to find information in different places — maybe some details are on a website but others are in a PDF — they won't be happy. If they need different logins, the situation gets even worse.

You may need a CRE marketing software to:

- ⊘ Provide an easy way to manage listings online by centralizing information on the front and backend

- ⊘ Create "no code" listing websites

- ⊘ Reduce or eliminate time-consuming manual processes

- ⊘ Replace and consolidate the use of different point solutions

Plus, a good software will give you visibility into marketing performance through:

- ☑ Key metrics
- ☑ Client activity
- ☑ Exportable reports
- ☑ Dashboards

From there, you can work to improve marketing efficiency with clarity about what's working and what's not.

Is your current marketing strategy fragmented?

You could also be dealing with internal inefficiencies. If you don't have a centralized hub to manage the digital presence of all of your listings, you're much more likely to have scattered — or even outdated or incorrect — property information out there.

Worse yet, a lot of CRE companies try to solve their marketing woes by hiring expensive design agencies to create custom property websites. Let's be clear: a CRE marketing software can give you the same beautifully branded websites at a fraction of the cost — and you get to retain full control over the content.

Because in-house CRE marketing software keeps branding control in your hands, it makes it easier to build trust with:

- ☑ Potential partners
- ☑ Brokerage community
- ☑ Tenants and investors

Is your company's marketing undifferentiated?

CRE companies have presented their listings in uninspiring ways for too long, and tenants and investors want more. They're not content to have to hunt down and organize flyers and PDFs anymore.

To make your properties stand out, you need to deliver:

- ✅ Digital experiences
- ✅ Interactive components with a "wow factor"
- ✅ Brand consistency

To meet investor/tenant expectations for digital access to information, some CRE companies leverage 3rd-party plugins and marketplaces that are not customized to their branding.

At that point, though, you're just another player in the game. You need CRE marketing software that makes your company stand out in a meaningful way.

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it's time to explore adding a CRE marketing software to your technology stack.

How to Choose a CRE Marketing Software in 6 Steps

So, how do CRE companies choose the right marketing software?

With these six steps, you can hone in on the right option for your business and its marketing goals.

Step 1: Define the expected outcome/set an objective

Before you shop for a solution, you need to get clear on what you want to get out of it.

CRE companies generally need a marketing software to help with:

- ✅ Faster go-to-market processes
- ✅ Faster property site creation
- ✅ Time savings on administrative tasks
- ✅ Increased credibility and trust
- ✅ Shorter implementation time for marketing strategies/campaigns

Think through what your company's best digital presence would look like. Is it online property listings aggregated into a searchable map, paired with lead management that powers marketing campaigns?

If so, you need to find a solution that delivers all of those expected outcomes.

Step 2: Identify the key features

As you're setting an objective, you'll undoubtedly start to identify the main functionalities your software will need to meet those goals.

The functionality should includes features like:

- ✅ Website creation

- ✅ Reporting and analytics

- ✅ Contact management

But don't stop there.

One of the key features CRE companies often gloss over is branding.

The issue is that some of the leading CRE marketing software providers love their branding so much that they won't let their clients customize their own presentations. Don't be fooled into thinking you have to aggregate your property listing websites into a search engine that could send prospects to other companies.

The right CRE marketing software will keep all of your prospects on your websites, building both your brand credibility and your revenue pipeline.

Step 3: Set the evaluation criteria

Before you start actually looking at products, develop a list of the essential evaluation criteria you're looking for in a CRE marketing platform.

Make sure these criteria align with the objective you set in step one. This will enable you to compare solutions in an objective way.

One of your key evaluation criteria, for example, might be a single software for all of your CRE marketing needs.

As you evaluate options, you may decide to only consider platforms that function as an all-in-one solution, letting you create property listing websites paired with a branded property search engine and email marketing campaigns — while simultaneously managing leads and a secure document portal.

Step 4: Ask these key questions

Armed with your evaluation criteria, it's time to start looking at the solutions themselves. As you do, ask:

1. How much customization is allowed?

2. How scalable is it?

3. How long is the setup process?

4. How much support is provided?

5. Does it integrate with other tools or platforms?

6. How user-friendly is it?

7. What companies are already using it?

8. How much does it cost?

If you can answer those eight queries, you'll have a strong handle on what the software can — and can't — do for your company.

Step 5: Demo and compare available solutions

You wouldn't buy a car without test driving it.

Your CRE marketing software should be no different. You need to make sure it will actually function the way you need. And, just as importantly, you need to make sure that your team will be able to figure out how to use it.

If the software provider refuses you a demo, walk away. Demos are a critical part of the marketing technology buying process and moving forward without one is like flying blind.

Ideally, you want to demo at least a couple of solutions and do so at around the same time. This gives you a way to feel each one out and compare it to the other(s) so you can identify what you like, what works, and where you might face roadblocks.

If you like one solution more than another but you're concerned about some particular feature, talk to the software provider. In many cases, they can offer the training you need to use it better or the customization your company requires.

Step 6: Research reviews and talk to references

You're not quite done. It's one thing for a demo to check out. It's entirely another to know that a company like yours has been successfully using the CRE marketing software to power its success.

To ensure that the solution you're considering works in real-world applications, start by reading reviews. A simple Google search (company name + "reviews") can clue you into what to expect and alert you to any red flags.

Also, ask to see the company's testimonials and inquire if they have any references. If the software provider can connect you to a company like yours and that team gets what they need from the software, you'll be able to rest easier picking them for your own firm.

Ultimately, choosing a CRE marketing software requires some work, but it's a must in our age of digital transformation. The longer you wait, the further behind you'll be.

Ready to learn more about SharpLaunch and see the platform in action?

Schedule a call with one of our experts.

Talk To An Expert

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