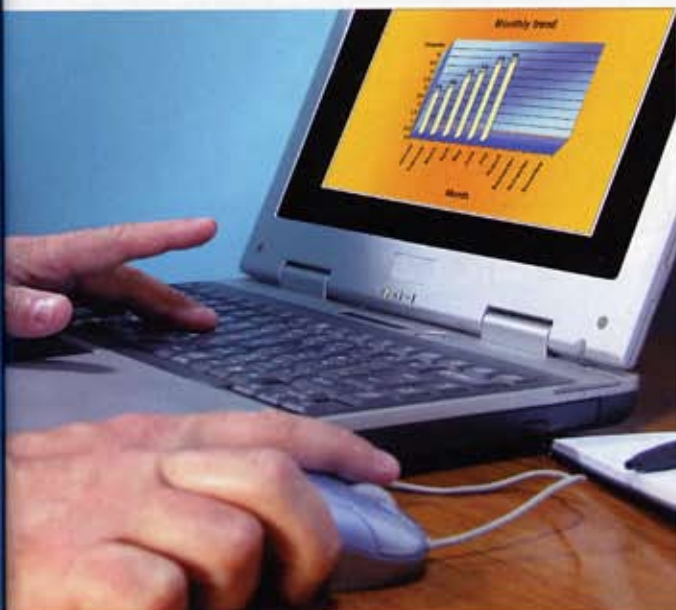


NICHE WEB STRATEGIES FOR WORKING SHORT SALES



A key element for working short sales is making sure you can get the word out in your market to let sellers know there are options other than the foreclosure route. Many times, the homeowner is hiding. They are trying to find out what they should do and are feeling overwhelmed. They are sitting in bed on a weeknight watching TV and searching for answers because they aren't sure if they can make their mortgage payments. The Nielsen Company just released data that 59% of TV viewers are also using their computer and that includes surfing the Web (that's up from 2% last year!).

Now you might say, "Tricia, what does this have to do with working short sales?" This means that if you want to reach distressed homeowners, you have to meet them where they are and focus on their emotional mindset. Sellers facing foreclosure are not necessarily going to go to a general real estate website to get information. To make sure that you are positioned, you have to have more than just a simple response form on your site.

Use these five steps to create a Web strategy to reach homeowners in need.

Step 1: Buy a domain name that is focused on their needs. For example: www.VirginiasHomeRescue.com. This is a domain name that tells the sellers exactly what this will do for them. They say to themselves, "Yes, I live in Virginia and, yes, I need help so I don't go into foreclosure."

Step 2: Now that you have a targeted URL, create a standalone niche site that is purely focused on the needs of the seller. This allows them to feel anonymous while getting information. Think of a family member who has gone through a serious illness. You want to research and get the information so you can speak with the doctor on an educated level. This is how a homeowner feels.

Step 3: Throughout the site, integrate call-to-action sections like "free reports," "qualifying forms," "worksheets" and more. By having information and lead capture sections, you should be positioned to get the lead and help them. Drew Hartanov with Prudential California shared with me, "Tricia, I realized that when I was talking with a homeowner or when they got my mailing that I was not giving them the opportunity to interact with me. I knew I had to have a website that was more target focused so I could drive distressed sellers to my site."

Step 4: Once they fill out forms, you want to make sure that you have a way to stay connected to them during their process. This is where an e-mail follow-up campaign is critical. Sellers seeking information and looking for answers may be in denial about what is happening. A drip campaign will allow you to stay in touch with them and also be positioned to help them when they ask for it.

Step 5: If you are certified to handle short sales, have the certification information on your website so that sellers know you are experienced and trained to handle their situation. **RE**

Tricia Andreassen is the CEO/Founder of Pro Step Marketing, a leader in brand and Web strategy for the real estate industry. As an industry expert, speaker and author, she has over 19 years' experience in helping Realtors grow their business. For more information, please visit www.prostepmarketing.com.