

Internet Advertising – What Should You Know?

The Internet is a tool to expose properties to a wide audience and have those properties available 24 hours a day/7 days a week to anyone in the world. Your broker needs your instructions on how to use the tool, and you should heed safety warnings concerning how it is used.

Exposure on the Internet is achieved through the use of “listing syndication”. The listing brokerage will provide your listing information to a selection of websites who may then re-syndicate this listing information to other websites. These websites do not perform this function out of the goodness of their hearts. The sites attempt to sell advertising to real estate agents and in some cases, will also attempt to obtain referral fees from agents in exchange for sales leads.

Your privacy and the privacy of your information is one of your broker’s primary concerns. Placing listing information on the Internet has an impact on your privacy. Neither your broker nor any other agent nor any of these websites can guarantee that every person or “hit” on your listing information is from a

potential purchaser. The information will be available not only to potential buyers but also to nosy neighbors, ex-spouses, friends and relatives, scam artists, vendors looking to sell products and services and tax assessors. The more widespread the exposure, the greater the possibility that one of these types of viewers will see your listing information.

In addition, the brokerage has no control over these sites or the re-syndication deals that these sites make with each other. There is no guarantee that information such as price changes, corrected errors or changes in the personal property to be included in the sale will follow each and every occurrence of the listing information on the Internet. Similarly, the listing information may be available on the Internet long after the listing has expired or the property has been sold.

Keep in mind that property photos, virtual tours and videos will also be available on the Internet for anyone to see. Please help your broker guard your privacy by removing, storing or covering valuables and personally identifiable information before photos, virtual tours and videos are taken.

Keep in mind also that buyers searching the Internet will be searching based on the existing price and basic features of your

property and viewing your property through the limited window of the website’s search criteria and their computer screen. This limits your agent’s opportunity to apply your agent’s sales abilities to any particular buyer. The buyer will not see and may be completely unaware of other factors such as the property’s surroundings or the possibilities for future expansion or renovations that may make your property more saleable. The potential purchaser may be making his or her decision as to whether to schedule a showing solely based on what they see on their computer screen and the site’s search criteria.

The brokerage may make some recommendations to you for sites that it uses to syndicate listing information. Listen carefully to the recommendations. Ultimately, your listing information belongs to you, and your agent needs your help to use the Internet tool to your best advantage while safeguarding your privacy.

NOTES:

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