

This is not to suggest you need to secure your name on all 130 networking sites. There is a limit to how many usernames and passwords any one human being can keep up with. As you can see from Figure 10, I've only secured about 15 of the most important ones for now. Some, like the ones mentioned in this ebook, I use almost every day. Others I've secured because I'm curious about the possibilities. The point is to pay attention and be purposeful about securing your name and your business brand. Tools like Namechk make this work a whole lot easier.

myths and truths about social media

There are more than a million reasons why you should take advantage of the systems and tools listed in this ebook. Likewise I imagine there are an equal amount of reasons going through your mind about why you can't or shouldn't implement a social media or Internet lead generation strategy. In an attempt to remove the can't, couldn't, wouldn't, shouldn't, never, ever, and won't(s) from your vocabulary, we composed a list of my favorite myths about the Internet and social media.

Myth 1 – I do not have the time.

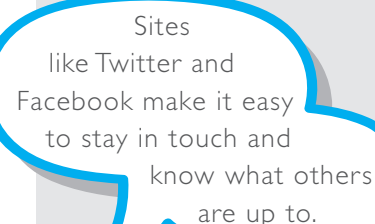
Truth – It doesn't take much time at all.

Once I had set up my social profiles, property searches, and blogs, the amount of time spent working on these strategies didn't exceed more than twenty minutes per day. One of the best things about Internet lead generation and social media prospecting plans is that you can be online at your leisure. I avoid time blocking my social media lead generation time during hours that I could be on the phone prospecting or on appointments with buyers or sellers.

Myth 2 – It's a time-waster.

Truth – It's a time-saver!

Are you networking or not working? The sad fact of the matter is that for many real estate agents social networks like Facebook and Twitter have not produced leads or closed transactions. The reality is that it is called a Social NetWORK, not a Social NetGAME or a Social NetVISIT. If you spend your time online "working"—



Sites like Twitter and Facebook make it easy to stay in touch and know what others are up to.

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which means building relationships, asking for appointments, or generating referrals—it could be one of the best uses of your lead generation time. Much like your traditional database, you have to communicate with it systematically and make offers that encourage immediate responses.

Myth 3 – Social networks are for children and teenagers.

Truth – Social networks are being embraced by all demographics.

Facebook.com’s statistics page states, “The fastest-growing demographic groups are those 35 years old and older.” The amount of people currently using social networks is astounding. In fact, Facebook has more than 60 million users in the United States over the age of 25 and almost 10 million over the age of 55. As social media mavens are fond of telling us, “Grandparents are more likely to be on social networks than their grandkids.” They’re right.

Myth 4 – It’s just a fad.

Truth – It’s fundamentally changing the way we communicate.

Honestly, one of the titles we seriously entertained for this ebook was *I’m So Over Social Media*. Like the author of the 1995 *Newsweek* article I mentioned earlier, maybe you too are getting a bit of a headache from the relentless buzz around social media. Maybe you wish it was a fad. Whether you’re already tired of it or just tapping into it, here’s the truth about social media: It is not a fad but rather a fundamental change in the way we communicate and interact. You have an opportunity to be in front of the pack and to position yourself to become, in essence, the “mayor of your online community.”

Myth 5 – Social media leads are poor leads.

Truth – Leads generated on social networks can be some of the highest quality leads available to real estate agents.

The popular YouTube video “Social Media Revolution” debunks the “it’s a fad” myth! (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIFYPQjYhv8>)

mariana wagner

Social media leads tend to have been listening and interacting online with you for a longer period of time prior to making physical contact. In my experience, they are more loyal and more likely to refer you to additional prospects. If you learn to work social media networks as adeptly as you work a room at a local social event you attend, the leads you get from your social networks can be as strong as any in your business. Fundamentally, we know that buyers and sellers want to work with someone they know, like, and trust. Social networks allow you to build relationships and connect with potential customers across the globe with little expense or risk.

Myth 5 – Social media replaces my other lead generation activities.

Truth – Social media is a tool that can enhance your existing lead generation plan.

The successful Internet-savvy agents that we have interviewed for this ebook stated clearly that social networks and Internet tools were used in conjunction with traditional forms of prospecting. Technology can reduce marketing and lead generation costs as well as leverage the amount of time spent doing certain activities, such as client and lead follow-up systems like the 33 Touch and 8 x 8. We will dive into this in more detail throughout the book.

Myths are the excuses that we use to limit our own success. In the epigraph, I referred to a quote from *Flight of the Buffalo* by James Belasco and Ralph Stayer that said, “Change is hard because people overestimate the value of what they have—and underestimate the value of what they may gain by giving that up.”

All the misunderstandings around the new social media landscape were a primary reason for launching the 2010 Swanepoel Social Media Report. Agents were asking for guidance on strategy, how to conduct themselves, how to manage their time, and, ultimately, how to measure their success.

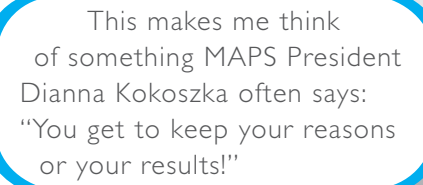
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Never replace what is currently making you money with something that might make you money. In the beginning, leverage your time by filling in your dead spots: Update Twitter while waiting for your buyer client to arrive. Interact with people on Facebook instead of playing Sudoku or Solitaire. Research statistics for a blog post while on hold with a short sale lender. Once you see that blogging and social media are translating into closed deals, then and ONLY THEN should you consider giving it the same priority as your current revenue-generating, lead generation activities.

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We have an important decision to make: Whether we choose to let go of our old habits and embrace the new opportunities that social media and the Internet are presenting, or we do nothing. If you choose to do nothing, then please don't expect the world to wait for you. The longer you wait to embrace this new realm, the harder it will be to catch up with your competition.

For those of you that are interested in embracing this opportunity and setting aside your myths, the next step will be to establish your online brand.



This makes me think of something MAPS President Dianna Kokoszka often says: "You get to keep your reasons or your results!"

stacia thompson