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Facebook and property management: Networking websites can increase a company's visibility

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For those of you who are familiar with such social networking websites as Facebook, you have undoubtedly learned that, yes, indeed, there is always something more to learn about your friend than you thought. One little thumbnail photograph of your Facebook friend can be quite revealing as to his or her inner psyche. And just when you think you have figured out your friend, a new photograph is posted. Or maybe a drawing, or an album cover, a note, or something that you don't even know what to make of it.

What is it about Facebook that has 200 million people constantly updating their status, collecting "friends" the way kids collect baseball cards, and revealing details about themselves that they would otherwise not dare speak in public?

The answer seems to stem from an inherent premise that people are social animals who want to inform and be informed. Those of us who earn a living in real estate industry seek the same indulgence. We strive to have our voices heard, to show what we've got to offer. We can no longer passively sit back and wait for prospective tenants to knock on our door or call us up to view a vacancy. Of course, there really was never a time when this would hold true, but certainly during the past few years, it is incumbent upon us to be seen and heard to make our presence known. We need to create a story.

We not only advertise our listings in newspapers, but we list them on any number of online networks. We upload photographs, floor plans, demographics, maps, and key information about the property for all the world to see. While this type of advanced marketing hasn't hit Facebook yet, there are strong indications that it is imminent. Pages are being created that allow visitors to become "fans" of a particular store or brand. Naturally, the next step is to promote a shopping center or industrial park. How do you draw people to your site? The answer could be time-proven - the coupon. Become a fan of our shopping center, and receive a coupon that could be used at any of our retailers.

It is true that face-to-face meetings are the most important way to connect with someone else. It is also true that we can only meet with a limited number of people during a busy workday. Networking websites can increase a company's visibility exponentially. By sitting in your office, you can connect with other professionals and clients. Not only that, but information is easily shared. Post a comment on a Facebook page, and within a short period of time, you'll see a number of responses and comments. While you may need to filter through the extraneous nonsense, what remains could prove useful.

Your company has value. You want to make people aware of that value. On the Internet, you can identify those websites where your target audience is engaging in conversations that bear relevance to real estate. In doing so, you can invite them to your website for more information.

Become part of the conversation. A networking site is an example of a community of conversations. Check in to see what other property management firms are doing. See the type of people who are visiting these sites. "Friend" them. Examine what their interests are and what they deem important with respect to real estate. By increasing your exposure, by creating a database, you can educate people about who you are and what you do. Share your accolades with your friends and fans. Post articles you've written.

Become an expert. Share your expertise. And listen to the conversations around you. You just may learn something.

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