



“Whether you’re a lender, title company, real estate agent or other participant in the mortgage finance industry, you should create a social media and content marketing strategy to stay relevant and competitive.”

How to Engage Customers and Earn Business Via Social Media

By Moses Keshishian

Unless you’ve been stranded on a desert island for the past decade, you know that consumer behavior has changed drastically when it comes to researching and making purchase decisions. In this era of social media, blogs, online reviews, and search engine optimization, traditional marketing and

advertising tactics have far less influence on consumers than they once did.

The current digital marketing game is all about empowering consumers to independently research products, companies, services and reputations to guide them toward a purchase decision. Most importantly, customers des-

perately seek to have their questions answered—and their anxiety diminished—before they part with their hard-earned cash.

Consider how someone might choose an auto mechanic or a restaurant. In the past, they might have simply seen an ad in the newspaper or found a listing in the phone book, and that was enough to give the business a try. Now, the first thing consumers do is look at the company’s website, check out the menu of services, and search for prices. Once they’ve found that information they’ll visit the company’s Facebook page for specials and third party customer testimonials. After that, they might do some comparison shopping—reviewing local competitors, their menus and prices. Reviews on Yelp or Angie’s List go a long way in terms of reputation.

If consumers do this level of deep-dive online and social media research on everyday purchases, it’s pretty safe to assume that they would do all of that, and more, when shopping for a mortgage loan, a realtor, or other service that will be managing one of the most important purchases of their lives.

Make it easy for them to find you

With historically low interest rates now a thing of the past, refinancings have all but evaporated. However, with home values slowly rising and lenders moving away from ultra-strict credit underwriting requirements, originations, home equity loans and reverse mortgages could begin trending upward. Regardless of what happens, the market will remain highly competitive.

Whether you’re a lender, title company, real estate agent or other participant in the mortgage finance industry, you should create a social media and content marketing strategy to stay relevant and competitive. It’s a key component to staying ahead of your competitors by getting your content, and your brand, in front of potential customers.

Prospective borrowers are using, and will continue to use social media and Google to research loan products, interest rates, special programs and incen-

tives—and most importantly—a company’s reputation before they even begin to make a move. Interestingly enough, there’s not a whole lot of information and answers available online from the people consumers want to hear from directly: Your firm.

Many of the nation’s top lenders have little or no presence on social media representing their consumer mortgage lending divisions. And if you search the types of questions borrowers would ask in a Google search, like “How do I find a good real estate agent” or “What should I do to find the best mortgage,” the results come from trade media, industry associations or bloggers, not from your company.

The best way to get in the game, and gain the trust of potential borrowers, is to become discovered by creating great content, and distributing that content through your social media channels like Facebook and Twitter.

Establishing yourself and your company as a trusted authority

A true leader, in any walk of life, is someone who can engender trust in others. People seek out transparent and honest answers to their questions online so they’ll know what to expect. If consumers are researching and asking their friends for opinions on local restaurants, it’s because they want to know they will have a great dining experience with no surprises when the check comes.

It’s important to understand that, according to an article on Google’s Zero Moment of Truth blog, 70 percent of a buyer’s purchase decision is made before they even contact you or your company. Your blog and social media channels are your tools to boost consumer confidence by having an open dialogue with them.

Ask yourself: “What are my potential clients reading about me and my business when they’re searching online?” You should be a part of the conversation no matter what it is they find, and you should be answering their questions on your website and social media platforms. It’s okay to be proac-

FIRST GUARANTY YOUR SUCCESS




THE CHANGE AGENT OF THE MORTGAGE INDUSTRY.

fgmcwholesale.com
fgmc correspondent.com
fgmwarehouse.com

888.295.7899
800.296.2275
888.637.0102

We are **First Guaranty Mortgage Corporation® (FGMC)**, and we are 100% committed to our **Correspondent, Wholesale and Retail** origination channels. Together with our **Capital Markets and Warehouse Lending Divisions**, we provide a full spectrum of lending products and services nationwide.

First Guaranty Mortgage Corporation® is an Approved Single Family Issuer for **Ginnie Mae**; an Approved **FNMA MBS** Issuer; Approved by **HUD**; an **FHA** Approved Lending Institution; Approved for **VA**; and Approved by **USDA**.



Celebrating 25 years of exceptional residential lending services.

First Guaranty Mortgage Corporation is an FHA Approved Lending Institution, and is not acting on behalf of or at the direction of HUD/FHA or the Federal government. First Guaranty Mortgage Corporation Headquarters is located at 1800 Galkins Road, Suite 800, Tysons Corner, VA 22182 (800) 296-2275. Company MMS# 2817 This information is solely for mortgage professionals and should not be provided to consumers or third parties. Information is subject to change without notice. First Guaranty Mortgage Corporation (Company MMS# 02 2817) is licensed by the Department of Business Oversight under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act, License No. 0037237. Regulated by the Division of Real Estate in the State of Colorado. Licensed by the Delaware State Bank Commissioner, License No. 2405. Georgia Residential Mortgage License No. 12067. Illinois Residential Mortgage License No. 180-0305484. Kansas Licensed Mortgage Company, License No. SL0000212. Licensed by the Mississippi Department of Banking and Consumer Finance, License No. 0002822006. Licensed by the New Jersey Department of Banking and Insurance, License No. 3700530. Licensed Mortgage Banker - N.Y.S. Banking Department, License No. 6503800 (d/b/a FGMC) in Lieu of True Corporate License. © 2014 First Guaranty Mortgage Corporation. For complete corporate and branch licensing information, visit www.fgmc.com or www.enbconsumeraccess.org. Follow us on: [LinkedIn](#)



social media

tive and answer questions they don't even know to ask.

Consumers get frustrated if they can't find answers to simple questions about pricing, procedures, and tips on how to get started. If you're a mortgage professional just getting started on social media, create content about how your loan processing works. Discuss your pricing structure. Provide tips on what to prepare for when they apply and what they need to do throughout the life of their loan. Share your thoughts about the lending market and signs a borrower should look out for when shopping for a loan. Other topics can be very simple, like the best times to buy or sell and how to monitor lending rates.

If you're stuck on what you should be writing about, ask your customer service professionals what questions they consistently get asked. Then all you have to do is convert those questions into blog posts.

You can also ask your own social media audience questions about their experiences, and turn the conversation into blog content. For instance you can ask your customers about the best lending experiences they've had, and then feature a few of the responses you received in your article.

Your fans and followers on social will be overjoyed to see that you've used their responses and stories in your post and will more than likely share your content with their friends and family. These kinds of conversations will earn you loyal repeat customers who will spread your message by talking about their good experience working with you.

If you produce great content on your blog, engage with your followers and show responsiveness on social media—all while establishing yourself as a trusted authority—the next time someone does a Google search for the questions you've answered, your blog articles will become a top search result. The result will be higher traffic flow to your website and more business leads.

Getting started on Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social network with more than one billion users. But why is it valuable for a mortgage company? The platform's value is in its power to connect people and help brands establish a human voice.

You can build an expert connection.

The easiest way to get started is by creating a Facebook business page and sharing your knowledge, insight and expertise. For the first time ever, the majority of active Facebook users are older, more affluent, and all potential clients you want to reach.

You can build a direct connection with your customers and an indirect connection with their entire social network of friends and family members, when they like, share, or comment on your Facebook posts. When Facebook users engage like this with your posts, it increases your chances to get discovered by their "friends of friends."

Facebook has broken down barriers by revealing the human side of businesses. It's allowed businesses to visually share real customer success stories. Facebook has demonstrated how powerful one video, one piece of content or one photo can be.

Use the "Social Media 411" posting strategy throughout the week to help you look credible:

- Four posts from sources that your audience will regard as valuable.
- One post about work accomplishments. For example: Share pictures and stories about your staff, share your blog posts, or photos and videos from special events.
- One post for pure entertainment value. Show your audience that you're part of their community.

If you're past the beginner stage and ready for more advanced tips, like learning how to cross promote your content, two great resources are: Social Media Examiner: www.socialmediaexaminer.com or Content Marketing Institute: www.contentmarketinginstitute.com.

Other important tactics and strategies

We spent a good deal of time discussing Facebook because it has the largest potential reach, but other networks cannot be ignored.

Twitter is a real-time medium for connecting with your customers. When a person tweets a company, they expect an answer in an hour. Being responsive is incredibly important because these public conversations influence the way people view the effectiveness of your customer service.

Like Facebook, Twitter is also a publishing platform for your blog content.

Using relevant hashtags (#) with your tweets makes your content easier to find. Another benefit is that you can see what your competitors are doing and you learn from their successes or mistakes.

Although Yelp isn't mentioned as often in this industry as Facebook and Twitter, it's a platform everyone should consider. Yelp has 60 million registered users, more than 20 million reviews posted and dominates the social review space. In fact, Yelp reviews are one of the highest ranked search results on Google.

Yelp helps consumers find the best business for their needs. If your approach to business begins and ends with customer satisfaction, then Yelp should be an absolute must-have marketing tool for your business.

People are going directly to the social media sources that deliver exactly what

they're looking for. Respond to complaints and accolades on Facebook because this is where they want to engage with your business on a personal level. Listen to customer feedback on Twitter and proactively search relevant hashtags to participate in industry conversations. Create and manage a Yelp profile because this is where most people go to determine a company's reputation.

No matter where you start on social media, it's all about customer service. Show your customers you care about them and want to earn their business.

Moses Keshishian is the social media specialist for the National Notary Association. He has expertise in retail banking having worked for Wells Fargo and Professional Business Bank. He may be reached by phone at (818) 739-4079 or by e-mail at mkeskishian@nationalnotary.org.

In today's mortgage banking industry,
you have a choice: you can play "follow the leader"
or you can be a leader ...

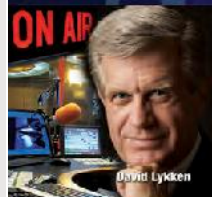
Lykken on Lending

With a 40-year career in mortgage lending, David Lykken is one of the most respected business leaders in the industry. He created **Lykken on Lending** in 2009 to offer his peers an insider's view of the trends, issues and personalities that impact mortgage banking and the wider economy.

Created by a mortgage professional for mortgage professionals, Lykken on Lending is a weekly 60-minute radio program hosted by mortgage veteran, David Lykken. Joining the program each week is Joe Farr with a MARKET UPDATE, Alice Alvey providing a LEGISLATIVE UPDATE and Andy Schell (a/k/a "The Profit Doctor") providing tips on FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT along with other regulars and featured guests.

Lykken on Lending brings forth the major players in mortgage banking for provocative and insightful conversation. This is the only mortgage banking media outlet where industry leaders speak directly without being edited or filtered by agenda-driven third parties.

Covering Topics from Main Street to Wall Street and Capitol Hill



Listen LIVE Coast to Coast

Mondays at 1:00pm Eastern/10:00am Pacific,
or dial in and listen at (646) 716-4972 or (877) 666-9318

Download the Podcasts of Previous episodes any time at

www.LykkenOnLending.com