



How to Generate **Leads and Listings** *with Craigslist*

Craigslist: Do you love it or hate it? Many real estate agents have found great success in generating both buyer and listing leads on the site, while many others find the process tedious, frustrating, and not worth the effort. In fact, many agents believe in a few common misconceptions about generating business on Craigslist. Have any of these misconceptions crossed your mind?

- Craigslist leads are bad leads. Consumers on Craigslist are only looking for bargains and cheap homes.
- Posting to Craigslist is too time consuming.
- There's too much competition—I'll never stand out.

Put these myths on the shelf for a few moments and discover some tools, tips, and best practices for generating business on Craigslist that will make these thoughts obsolete.

Start with the right tools

There's more to Craigslist than just posting text ad after text ad, and the first step in finding success is having the right tools. Consider these six must-haves:

- **Craigslist.org account [Must Have]:** You'll need a free Craigslist account in order to post to their site.
- **Lead capture website [Must Have]:** It's another common misconception that leads who find you on Craigslist will pick up the phone and call you. Instead, they want to be provided with links to your website, where they can find more information before reaching out on a more personal level. Because of this, you'll need an informative website that captures leads' information seamlessly.
- **Connected CRM system with lead reporting [Must Have]:** Finally, save time and bypass the need for a craigslistadtracker.com account by utilizing a CRM system that includes lead reporting.
- **Craigslistadtracker.com account.** This website tracks the effectiveness of the ads you post, and the site offers a free two-week trial. Utilizing this type of technology helps you to know what strategies are working for you, and what you need to do differently, saving you valuable time and helping you get the most out of your ads.
- **Image Shack.** Image Shack is a free service that lets you attach hyperlinks to any image, meaning that images you post on Craigslist will click through to your website every time.
- **HTML editor.** A free online HTML wizard, like the one found at htmledit.squarefree.com, lets you create HTML text for your ads, without needing to know how to code on your own. To finish the job of making your images link back to your website, simply take the HTML text that Image Shack has provided you for a specific image, remove the text that links it back to Image Shack's website, and replace that portion with a link to your own website.

Best practices for Craigslist lead generation

The most important aspect to increasing your lead generation with Craigslist is to get buyers and sellers to your website! However, this only works if your website is optimized for lead capture and provides resources for the consumer such as listings and neighborhood statistics. Use these best practices for generating leads on Craigslist.

- **Use an attention-grabbing headline.** Consumers on Craigslist are in browsing mode. Write interesting, specific headlines and keep the description concise.
- **Keep the ad short and sweet with very little content.** DO NOT provide a ton of information within your ad, otherwise there's no incentive for the consumer to click through to your website. We'll get to a few examples that will help explain this later on in this paper.
- **Post your listings during peak hours.** The vast majority of people on Craigslist are searching either early in the morning or late in the evening. To make your ads stand out, post an hour or two before these peak times. Also, wait 48 hours before reposting or removing ads, to avoid being flagged as a spammer.
- **Always link back to your website.** Today's consumers don't want to pick up the phone and call you based on an ad they've seen online. They want to have an online conversation first. Make it easy for them to take the next steps.
- **Take a critical look at your website and what it's offering clients.** Spend a few minutes taking a fresh look at your own website. All of its content should focus on the customer, not on you and your business. Emphasize service, not sales.
- **Include an IDX feed from your MLS.** The number one reason consumers visit real estate websites is to find home listings. Make sure yours are front and center. Don't give them a reason to leave your website to view other listings.

Generating listing leads on Craigslist

In addition to finding buyer leads, it's possible to find listing or seller leads on Craigslist. But, the strategy is a bit different. Here are some tips:

- **Know what sellers are looking for.** Whereas buyers are always looking for home listings, sellers always want to know how their home stacks up in their local market.
- **Include a strong call to action.** For example, invite people to find the value of their home, either for selling or refinancing purposes. Then, route them back to your website to find that information, all while capturing their contact information. You can also invite sellers to visit your website to find current market trends and analysis. Try a headline like "Is now the right time to sell?"
- **Appeal to sellers in the FSBO section.** Create targeted messaging for consumers who may be struggling to sell their home on their own. Use attention-grabbing headlines like "Need help selling your home quickly in Seattle?" Provide a clear value proposition that appeals to frustrated do-it-yourself sellers.

Examples of effective Ads:

Selling or Refinancing?? How does your home compare... (Anchorage)

Date: 2013-01-15, 7:22AM PST
You have chosen not to show an email address. Be sure you include contact information in your ad, or nobody will be able to answer it!
Reply to: see below

[Get Your FREE Home Report www.ComeHomeAnchorage.com](http://www.ComeHomeAnchorage.com)

Home Information

Address:

Zip/Postal Code:


Beds: Any Baths: Any

Square Footage:

Contact Information to Receive Your Report

First Name: Last Name:

Email: Home Phone:



This ad uses the home value comparison as the call to action. There is very little content. The goal is to get the consumer back to the agent's (your) website.

Need Help Selling your Home? (Cardiff)

Date: 2013-01-15, 9:13AM PST
You have chosen not to show an email address. Be sure you include contact information in your ad, or nobody will be able to answer it!
Reply to: see below

[If You Are Behind On Payments Or Just Need Advice On Selling Your Home www.NorthSanDiegoHomeSearch.com](http://www.NorthSanDiegoHomeSearch.com)

Search the entire northwest MLS for FREE at www.NorthSanDiegoHomeSearch.com/search
Get a FREE report on YOUR HOME's Value at www.NorthSanDiegoHomeSearch.com/sel

Tip on using pictures – Never use a picture of a home. What if the consumer doesn't like the picture? Your ad is immediately disqualified. It is good to include some sort of image within your ad, but remember, your goal is to drive the consumer back to your website to browse photos and view other homes.



Examples of effective Ads: (continued)

IS NOW THE TIME TO SELL??? (Anchorage)

Date: 2013-01-15, 9:22AM PST

You have chosen not to show an email address. Be sure you include contact information in your ad, or nobody will be able to answer it!

Reply to see below

Enter your zip code below to pull up the most current Market Data for FREE!

Enter a Zip Code to Get started: 99502

Market Analysis | Community Info | Local Schools | Compare Areas | Insider Tips

Price Trends - Sold vs. Listed

The median list price in January for single family homes in Anchorage is **\$399,900**. The list prices increased by **+8.14%** from the previous month. The price per square foot for listings in this area is **\$182**.

The median sale price in September for single family homes is **\$369,276**. The sale prices dropped by **-9.9%** from the previous month.

The price per square-foot for sales in this area is **\$124**.

Most sellers are going online to gather data. This ad uses Market Leader's Market Insider feature to provide relevant information. The image is hyperlinked, so when the seller clicks on the box to enter their zip code it sends them to the report which is integrated on the agent's website.

Get Started

Now that we've cleared up some misconceptions and you have learned the tips, tools, and best practices for generating both buyer and seller leads on Craigslist, it's time to get started. Set aside time each day to post high quality ads with clear value propositions and Craigslist is sure to become one of your most valuable lead generation tools.

This paper was put together by the experts at Market Leader. If you're interested in learning more on how Market Leader helps real estate professionals get the most out of their lead generation efforts, visit www.marketleader.com.