

## **Social Networking and your REALTOR®**

Traditionally, finding a REALTOR® to work with usually happened one of two ways: either you picked a name that you saw on a For Sale sign in someone's yard, or you got a referral from a friend or family member who had worked with a REALTOR® to buy or sell their home.

These days, there are many more ways to find and choose a REALTOR®, and many of them involve the social networking programs that are becoming ubiquitous and very popular among Canadian internet users. To meet that change head-on, many REALTORS® are moving beyond simply maintaining a personal web site to promote themselves and their services on social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

The ads on Facebook are targeted to the network you belong to, so if you are a Facebook member in the Ottawa network, a local REALTOR® advertising him or herself on Facebook might pop up in your sidebar one day while you're checking in with your friends' recently posted photos. Click on the ad and you'll be taken to his or her home page where you can read about their business model, their recent listings and sales, and how to get in touch with them. Some REALTORS® also run or belong to Facebook groups, so if you search for "Ottawa Real Estate" in the Facebook search box, you'll come up with quite a few results.

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site where users can build a network of colleagues and contacts tailored to their interests and industry. You can search your network – which is composed of your connections as well as each of their connections - for search terms such as REALTOR® or real estate agent. Twitter, a sort of micro-blogging site, also has an excellent search engine where you can look for terms like real estate or REALTOR® to find Twittering REALTORS® (of which there are many!).

Many REALTORS® have also embraced blogging. They provide readers with regular updates about what's happening in their market, offer advice for buyers and sellers, highlight hot new listings, and offer insight into how they do business. Reading a REALTOR®'s blog is one way to get an idea if he or she might be someone you'd like to work with.

Another great source for finding a REALTOR® is the Ottawa Real Estate Board's website, [www.OttawaRealEstate.org](http://www.OttawaRealEstate.org). It hosts an online roster of members searchable by name or by brokerage. While you're there, you can search Ottawa properties for sale (and contact the salesperson by e-mail directly from the listing) and also obtain information about first-time buying and government programs that exist to help make that purchase a little easier.

The internet is full of real estate information and resources just waiting for you to find them. It's amazing how technology can lead you to just the right human being to help you buy or sell your home.

***Readers are encouraged to send questions or request topics to be discussed in this column. Please send your requests to [info@thenewsemc.ca](mailto:info@thenewsemc.ca)***