

Listing advantage

Online Feedback on Your Properties

This article was published on: 09/01/2001

ASK MR. INTERNET

Keep yourself and your sellers in the loop with this automated system for showing comments.

DEAR MR. INTERNET:

The competition for new listings in my market is fierce. Is there some other way besides my Web site that I can use the Internet to my "unfair" advantage?

Paul Johnson, CRS, GRI

*Century 21 Potomac West
Cumberland, Md.*

DEAR PAUL:

Actually, there are any number of ways you can use the Internet to achieve that "unfair" advantage. Here's one solution that will definitely help you stand head-and-shoulders above your competition.

Prospective sellers have three major concerns during a listing presentation:

- Their property will sell quickly and painlessly for the listed price.
- You are the best practitioner to market their property.
- They will know what's going on during the marketing process.

Your prospects' views on your ability to accomplish the first two concerns depends on your sales skills. However, there's a unique and powerful online tool that can greatly enhance your ability to keep them informed and elevate you to "marketing guru" status in their eyes. By the way, it's also an excellent aid to help you justify needed price adjustments (without being the bad guy); it may even help you sell your listings faster.

Homefeedback.com is a patent-pending online service that essentially allows you to automate the showing feedback on your listings. This option will:

- Encourage more and more detailed feedback from showing salespeople with a lot less effort on your part.
- Aggregate the feedback information automatically in easy-to-understand graphs, charts, and actual comments from salespeople about the property.

- Allow you to use this objective feedback to persuade sellers to modify their price or to improve the condition of their property. And since these comments are from third parties, sellers are more likely to accept them without any negative repercussions for you.

Here's how you get started:

1. Create your account. Go to Homefeedback.com, and create an account to start using the system. At this writing, there is a \$29.95 one-time set-up fee and a \$9.95 charge for every listing you track. (See the special pricing* for Mr. Internet readers at the end of this article.)

2. Customize your feedback questions. There's a default list of feedback questions for showing salespeople, but you can also customize the questions to fit your area, the type of property, and marketing style.

3. Incentivize feedback response. You have the option of creating a "bonus" system with your feedback forms that rewards quick responses to e-mailed feedback requests. The reward can be as simple as lottery tickets or any other valuable and exciting give-aways.

Once the set up is complete, you're ready to start adding listings to the system by completing a one-page form. You or your assistant can do this in just a few minutes.

Every time salespeople show one of your listings, you can enter the contact information you receive into the system.

Homefeedback automatically sends an e-mail requesting their feedback for the specific property. This message includes a link to a special location on Homefeedback's site where they can easily and quickly enter their comments into your form. If a salesperson doesn't respond within three days, the system will send another request. If a salesperson still doesn't respond after the third request, the seller is automatically sent an e-mail indicating the lack of response. This is yet another way Homefeedback makes you look good; you've made the effort even if someone else drops the ball. You can use this same contact list to notify salespeople about changes in price or terms of a listing.

You and the sellers are notified by e-mail when a feedback form is received. Sellers receive their own password-protected page where they have 24-hour access to the statistics and comments and can view the status of requested but not yet received feedback. You can restrict sellers' access to the salespeople's attached comments, which may be a good idea if the comments are unnecessarily critical.

Homefeedback also enables sellers to directly enter showing salespeople's contact information from business cards left after each showing. Although sellers don't have to participate, this option is very powerful because it allows sellers to become directly involved with the marketing process and makes them feel they are doing something important and useful. In addition, it removes a data-entry burden from your shoulders.

As if the marketing benefit of rapid salesperson feedback weren't enough, Homefeedback is also an incredibly powerful tool to boost your listing presentation closing rate. What seller wouldn't be impressed with a practitioner who could provide this level of almost immediate response?

Here's how to take advantage of this great listing tool. (Note that the following explanation assumes you use Internet Explorer 5.0 or later as your browser. The steps for those using Netscape will be similar.)

- Get permission from the sellers of one of your recently listed properties to use their property and its feedback comments for your demonstration.
- Go to Homefeedback.com and log in as that seller. You will see a screen like [this](#).
- Now click on a "View Feedback" link in the "Status" column. This stores a copy of each feedback page in your browser cache. You will need to click on each feedback link separately to save it as described below.
- Go back to the seller's main page and save it and all of its links as a "favorite" to be viewed offline so you don't have to log onto the Internet when you're making your listing presentation. (For more on using your browser for offline presentations, read [my article](#) at [epowernews.com](#).)

Armed with this wonderful offline presentation of actual feedback on one of your listings, you can show prospective sellers that you and they will receive the fastest possible response on what the market really thinks about their property. Your demonstration will also show sellers that they are constantly in the marketing loop and, in fact, can be a part of the marketing process, thus psychologically binding them to you as part of the same team.

Now, what do you think a prospective seller is going to say when you present this program as an integral part of your listing package? How about: "Where do I sign!" At the regular set-up price of \$29.95 your investment is minimal compared to the huge returns in time saved, reduced effort, faster sales, and additional listings.

However, it gets even better. If you use the special sign-up page for "Mr. Internet" readers, your initial cost is only \$14.95.* Additional savings on an incredibly powerful tool that can only be described as your "unfair" listing advantage.

** Editor's Note: Neither Mr. Internet, nor any of the staff or officers of RUSSEY Communication, nor Realtormag.com, nor the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®, receive any compensation whatsoever from this or any other vendors that participate in the e-Bate™ program.*

Tip of the Month

One way to get prospects to read your e-mail is to include an attention-getting subject line. The following tactic will work for those recipients who use Outlook Express 5.0 or Outlook 2000 or later as their e-mail provider.

Simply add between 20 and 30 blank spaces after your normal subject line and then put a period at the end. This will cause a "tool-tip" type of window—similar to the box you get when you roll your cursor over an icon or graphic on a Web page—to pop up when recipients pass the cursor over the subject line in their inboxes. Use a subject line such as "I Found You A New Home." The effect is very dramatic. And don't worry if your recipients don't use a newer version of Outlook; the subject line will just look a little long to them.

Article Resources

[Homefeedback.com](#): A fee-based online, automated feedback system for your listings that can turn that information into a killer listing tool.