bring something to the conversation...

Navigating the World of Social Media

BEST PRACTICES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMON TERMS

PRESENTED BY

Sotheby’s INTERNATIONAL REALTY

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The proper presentation of the Sotheby’s International Realty® brand is critical at every level and in every marketing vehicle, including Social Media. To maintain both our distinguished lineage and the high value that consumers place in the Sotheby’s International Realty name, it is imperative that we remain consistent to our Brand’s vision and positioning in all communication - in every medium.

Our continued success lies in the efforts of the Sotheby’s International Realty network to be good stewards of the brand, to provide excellent service to our customers and to consistently present the Sotheby’s International Realty marks according to the standards and guidelines.

As we continue to explore the many ways in which social media can enhance our marketing efforts and positively increase awareness of the brand, it is essential that we maintain our efforts to protect our most valuable asset – the Sotheby’s International Realty name.

Well-defined brands help shape the way consumers think and feel about a business even before they walk in the door, respond to an advertisement or experience the brand online. Therefore it is paramount that all social media initiatives focus on quality versus quantity, meaning that your online efforts are deemed successful not by how many/how much you post but by how meaningful the content is that you provide. It is our belief that in the luxury space, less really is more.

The following Social Media Best Practices document contains general recommendations as well as definitions and common terms to help you navigate the growing social media space, as well as how to apply the Sotheby’s International Realty branded elements across all online communications.
social network:
a website or network of sites where users can develop a
personal profile page ("presence") and connect it to others,
to communicate, share ideas, content and interact.

social network profile:
a personal or professional account that references profile
information such as your photo, logo, contact information,
address or other personally or professionally identifiable
information.

posting:
any “addition” of content to a profile page, such as an update
to your current status, a blog entry, a comment, photo, hyperlink or other data.

wall:
the “main section” of your profile page on most social
networks that keeps a running-log or time-dated journal of
entries on your profile. The Wall is where you make post-
ings that you and others can see. Your contacts may be able
to post directly on your Wall as well, with comments, mes-
sages, photos or other content.

status / update:
a short posting that usually refers to “what you are do-
ing right now” that others in your network can see on the
“news” page of most social networks.

news feed:
the main page of a social network that collects the latest
news, postings or updates from your personal sphere of in-
fluence and displays them in a constantly-updated timeline
or log.

applications:
small programs that many social networks use to create
interactivity, provide utilities or other useful features such as
a calendar, file storage, bookmarking, or other tools.

gifting application:
a special type of application used on sites like Facebook
where users can “send” an image of a gift to people in their
network. For example you can send someone an image of
an “anniversary card” or “birthday card” or other imagi-
nary item; the recipient usually can accept or reject the gift,
and send one “back” to you. This creates an opportunity for
entertaining interactivity with your contacts.

share function:
the ability to “re-post” content from one person’s profile
to your own Wall, for purposes of sharing or republishing
content into your own network of contacts.

comment:
adding a note or reaction to someone’s posting in the form
of a wall posting or direct message that is publicly visible to
everyone in the same network.
Social Media is like walking into a cocktail party where you discuss a wide range of topics - some business, some personal but pretty high-level small talk. As you feel your way around the room and interact with people you have something in common with, you begin to share your ideas and experiences with each other.

Online, social networking operates on different levels: Whether it is LinkedIn (“here’s my resume”), Facebook (“this is what I have been up to”) or Twitter (“quick! - look what I found”), Social Media connects you to people in your on-line world by sharing interesting and valuable experiences. Here is an example: An old colleague may find you on Linkedin and begin sharing business contacts and professional ideas. A favorite aunt or uncle is connected to you on Facebook, to keep up with the latest photos of your children. You might also develop a second profile using a business account on FaceBook to dedicate specifically to your professional services and target the market you serve by connecting with members of the local community and sharing pertinent business stories. With a Twitter account, you start to gain “followers” who connect with you after reading a newsflash you posted (tweeted) possibly about interest rates being reduced or a link to a real estate industry story.

In the world of real estate, you should use social media as an adjunct to your marketing arsenal with one goal – to drive more business. In our view, that means being concise and relevant, and most importantly… bringing something valuable to the conversation.
Because social networks can be used for personal and professional interactions, we highly recommend you create a personal AND business social media strategy. In some cases, you may wish to have more than one “profile” in each network, which will help separate personal and professional participation. In other cases, only one type of profile may be appropriate to the “culture” and norms of the network. Take time to browse and learn about the acceptable behavior in each network before fully implementing your profile.

PROFESSIONAL “PROFILES” - ADHERING TO BRAND STANDARDS

It is especially important to adhere to the proper usage guidelines for your company name and for the brand name. As in any medium – it is not acceptable to abbreviate the Sotheby’s International Realty® name. (Example: Smythe & Jones SIR) Your business name or DBA should be written out completely in every instance unless otherwise noted for specific online spaces. (Example: Smythe & Jones Sotheby’s International Realty) The name “Sotheby’s” may never be used on its own in reference to your business or your affiliation with Sotheby’s International Realty®. “Sotheby’s” refers to the auction house and is reserved exclusively for use by them and in reference to them.

Please refer to the following link which highlights the correct use of the mark http://members.sothebysrealty.com/standards-guidelines.aspx (pg. 6-8 of Identity Standards Manual)

The trademarked positioning lines such as, “Connoisseurs of Life” and “Inviting, Discreet, Savvy and Refined”, should be used whenever possible to help create a consistent, brand experience. For a list of the many branded headlines/taglines and phrases, please refer to the members’ site at http://members.sothebysrealty.com/defining-brand.aspx

Also keep in mind that each social media is different and may require its own set of guidelines. For example, Twitter does not allow branded logos to appear whereas Facebook does. Think of Twitter as a classified ad and Facebook as a display ad – the same logo rules apply.

PERSONAL “PROFILES”

It is important to remember, in your personal on-line space, the Sotheby’s International Realty® marks should not be included. Keep in mind, your presence online in any social network directly reflects your image in the marketplace. Frequently, you cannot “undo” your impression or impact, so always pay careful attention to the image you convey through your personal social networking profiles as it may reflect on the brand as well.
general recommendations

on a daily basis...

The following recommendations should be kept in mind, on a daily basis, when developing your personal and professional “profiles”.

■ GROW YOUR NETWORK SELECTIVELY
Consider each request to “connect” or become friends with others that you make or accept. While social networking can be a powerful way to connect with, maintain and even grow your sphere of influence, keep in mind that these networks are open to everyone online. Be sure you review and evaluate every request to connect with someone to determine if they will add appropriate value to your online presence.

■ CAREFULLY CONTROL AND MANAGE INFORMATION IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK “PROFILES”
Because professional information (listings, photos, virtual tours, client information etc.) can be quickly and easily be transmitted around the world, it’s important to adhere to the following guidelines:

• Never post personal, proprietary or confidential information about your clients into a social network. This may extend to data such as street addresses, names or other personally identifiable information.

• Obtain written permission from your clients before posting their property information, pictures or videos into any social networks. Explain to them the pros and cons.

• Post links to your listings and content, rather than duplicating or posting the content directly into the site. Links to your website can be more easily controlled (such as expiring them when a listing is no longer available) where directly entered images/data can be saved/duplicated beyond your control by third-parties.

• Consider limited posting of listings and property data to your social networks. Most participants in social media are not looking for more “advertising” content from their network. Limited and periodic promotion of inventory or services may be sufficient to remind your network of your real estate capabilities and opportunities. Constant or high volume posting of listing data on social network sites may discourage people from joining or remaining connected if they only experience advertising activity.

• Identify specific areas or networks where business promotions, listing and personal advertising is acceptable, such as certain Facebook pages dedicated to promoting listings and generating referrals, LinkedIn Groups dedicated to similar interactions and YouTube channels. Direct your promotional and advertising activities to these pages, leaving your personal and company sites and blogs for knowledge sharing and relationship building activities.

■ FOR PROFESSIONAL “PROFILES”, BE CAREFUL TO INTERACT GENTLY WITH CONSUMERS AND CLIENTS
Even though social networks are often more informal than other formats of interacting with people, some things are “better left unsaid.”

■ AVOID “MASS EMAILING” IN YOUR SOCIAL NETWORKS
While these networks make it easy to reach out to your contacts via integrated messaging, it is less acceptable to use these system for mass direct email messaging. Instead, post selective and more personal messages on your contact’s profiles, to build rapport and maintain relationships. If you are considering email, please use the Presentation Studio on our members’ intranet site to facilitate this.

■ MARKET YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK ACCOUNT
Include your Social network account links in your email signature files, company website profile pages and any other “contact” spots where consumers might connect with you in a social network in addition to using phone or email.

■ BE PREPARED TO MAINTAIN YOUR PRESENCE ONLINE BY MONITORING AND RESPONDING QUICKLY AND CONSISTENTLY
One of the most important elements of social networking is “creating presence.” It is a real-time, persistent phenomenon. Whether you maintain a profile for your company or personally, it can only be effective if updated regularly – in many cases, daily.

For professional profiles, consumers and/or clients may offer comments, feedback or directly post into your profiles. In some cases, these may be requests for information, service or assistance, which can generate new business opportunities. In other cases, you may wish to immediately monitor, react to (and if necessary, remove) inappropriate postings to your business profile page.

It is also important to monitor what is happening to the people in your network – and participate by communicating with them on a regular basis as well.
**general recommendations**

**final thoughts**

- **MAINTAIN SECURITY OVER “PROFILE” PAGES**
  Always maintain secure access to your company or personal profile pages with an appropriate password. If you use a common computer in the office or shared computer, be sure to log-out of your profiles when you are done updating them, to prevent unauthorized or accidental access by others.

- **PLANNING IS IMPORTANT, BUT BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVER-PLAN (OVER-ENGINEER) YOUR SOCIAL NETWORKING.**
  Your network will know the difference between personal, spontaneous interactions and a highly-structured interaction. While planning a schedule of topics for your blog entries might make some sense, don’t preclude reacting quickly to market events, news, or special opportunities. Build a sense of fun and even “unpredictably” into your social media efforts.

- **UNDERSTAND THAT SOCIAL NETWORKING IS A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT.**
  If you start, you must maintain the effort. It is not a marketing campaign process but a permanent presence and communications medium that will evolve but will likely never go away. Be sure to resource your time and/or people appropriately to be successful over a very long term.

- **UNDERSTAND TERMS OF USE**
  Always read and understand the terms of use/services, privacy policies and disclaimers for each Social Media outlet you sign up for.

**tips and ideas**

- **SOME SOCIAL NETWORKS CAN BE USEFUL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES.**
  When using social networks to conduct polls or post questions/answers/feedback, always be sure to inform or disclose how you may use the information provided. When using information obtained from your social network’s profile information, always comply with appropriate consumer protection and privacy laws.

- **CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE’S LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS**
  If your network consists of large numbers of contacts with multiple language preferences, consider creating multiple profiles for each language, to avoid confusion. Many networks also have language “settings” or language-specific sites where you can create additional profiles and manage networks in those areas.

Remember, it is imperative that we remain consistent to our Brand’s vision and positioning in all communication - in *every* medium.

**Broker’s Corner**

**BROKERS, MANAGERS AND MARKETING DIRECTORS SHOULD ESTABLISH “SOCIAL MEDIA” WITHIN EXISTING MARKETING PLANS**

Brokers should consider developing a “social media” aspect to their overall marketing plan. Many platforms offer direct and extensive methods for enhancing their Public Relations, direct marketing and community network effects of other media. For example, a press release normally printed in a newspaper can also be posted into a blog, then reposted in multiple social networks, recorded and distributed as a pod-cast on systems like iTunes or even video-broadcast through websites like YouTube. By reviewing and integrating various social media channels into existing marketing methods, brokers can maximize these new consumer-direct communications tools.
NOTE: For a company profile your company name/DBA should be written out completely as there are no character minimums

- **GENERAL CULTURE**  
  More “personal” than “professional,” although it is acceptable to post and discuss business issues and opportunities. Think of Facebook as most like a gathering on a golf-course or a party. Many different kinds of discussions – personal and professional – are taking place. This same culture exists in Facebook, with slightly more concentration on personal (everyday) issues than professional.

- **SEPARATION OF BUSINESS AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTS**  
  Brokers and company owners should maintain a separate business account for your company page than your personal account on Facebook. This may involve using multiple separate email accounts (check the latest terms of use for the service). Use this business or organizational profile to connect with clients, prospects, other real estate and business partners and the public.

- **THE FACEBOOK BUSINESS PROFILE**  
  Create a Facebook business profile which includes a variety of tools – updates, postings, blogs, videos, etc – that can be used to communicate industry and business-related issues. People who connect to these sites are considered “fans” and will expect the interactions to be more business-like in nature. You can also control the content, restricting who can post information into the site, to maintain an appropriate atmosphere and presence.
  - Use your company logo or a picture of the office as your profile image.
  - Integrate your office’s blog into the business profile, to quickly re-distribute content from the blog into your social network.
  - Create an office photo album, to include images of your office or other marketing imagery. For brokers–include the office-team and/or sales associates.

- **THE FACEBOOK PERSONAL PROFILE**  
  Brokers and agents may wish to establish a personal Facebook profile for communicating with close friends, family and sphere of influence. They may wish to restrict their personal network to this close sphere of influence, and encourage clients, prospects and past customers to connect through their business profile presence.
  - Remember that personal profiles may contain content of a highly personal nature (political, social, personal, etc). Your friends on your personal page will also have access to any personal information you post, such as family photos, events, travel, etc.
  - Consider using the “group” function within Facebook to further restrict the types of content your friends can see (in personal or professional profiles). The group function can limit access to photo albums, certain status updates and other sensitive aspects of your profile by assigning “viewing rights” to your friends. Likewise, group restrictions can control who can post content into your profile pages as well, limiting the ability of others to add content or comment on your page.

- **POSTING UPDATES**  
  Vary your postings format. Sometimes, post a quick text message. Other times, consider posting a photo or video as your contribution. Using different media can creatively capture the attention of your friends and engage them.

- **KEEP SOME INTERACTIONS PRIVATE**  
  You can communicate on private matters using the Email function within Facebook or communicating separately by phone, email or offline, rather than on the wall/comment features.

- **INTEGRATION OF OUTSIDE CONTENT INTO A FACEBOOK PAGE, WALL OR BOX**  
  Outside content should always support your company’s image and never violate copyright law, be offensive or encourage inappropriate behavior. Consider carefully when posting links to third-party video clips, blogs or websites, photos, graphics or other content that may change or be outside of your control.

- **THE USE OF FACEBOOK APPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS PURPOSES**  
  Applications should be restricted to general and non-offensive tools. For example, using various “gifting” applications should be carefully monitored so that the items that can be “sent” or posted to the profiles of others in their network are inoffensive and appropriate in nature.

- **CREATE “COMMUNITY” AND SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES ON THE PAGE**  
  You can use the “Causes” application to support your company charity or local cause, and spread awareness of any company-sponsored causes within your sphere of influence.

- **MONITOR COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK ON ANY POSTINGS ON YOUR PAGE**  
  Be sure to interact quickly with anyone who posts on your page.

- **MONITOR FRIEND REQUESTS AND PROCESS THEM IN A TIMELY FASHION.**  
  Be sure to accept invitations from friends while they are new, to show your interest and appreciation for being invited into their network.

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**Help Resources:**

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**Broker’s Corner**

**Brokers should connect with their sales associates business profiles on Facebook**

This will increase network-effects of sharing information. This will also provide brokers and managers a way to coach and monitor their agents’ use of the medium for business purposes.
navigating the world of social media  |  general recommendations - LinkedIn

**GENERAL CULTURE**
More "professional" than "personal," although it is acceptable to post and discuss both. Think of LinkedIn as a gathering business networking event. Most discussions focus around business opportunities, ideas and communications. In fact, LinkedIn profiles are very similar to “resumes” with enhanced features, although usually more limited than Facebook's available tools.

**SEPARATION OF PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTS**
Since LinkedIn is generally more focused on business issues, the need for multiple profiles may be lower than other networks. However, establishing a company profile on LinkedIn is still generally desirable, since it can be used for recruiting and general informational purposes to the network.

- Brokers should establish a personal profile for purposes of high-level business networking, recruiting and industry relations.
- Sales Associates should establish a personal profile for purposes of maintaining contact with referral contacts, past and current clients, and their professional business sphere of influence.

**THE LINKEDIN BUSINESS AND PERSONAL PROFILES**
Most profiles on LinkedIn are centered around a "resume" approach. Company and personal profiles should always include:

- A business appropriate photo
- Completed present and past content (occupation, education)
- A general description of company or personal capacities, skills, knowledge and resources
- Accurate contact information

**"RECOMMENDATIONS" FEATURE**
A special feature of LinkedIn are the "Recommendations" feature. Both company and personal profiles should feature at least three or more Recommendations from clients who have done business with you. Recommendations are most effective when they come from people who have directly experienced your products and services; these are most credible to any potential prospects who review your profile before deciding to contact you.

**CONNECT ANY BLOG OR RSS FEED TO YOUR ACCOUNT**
The “WordPress” feature of LinkedIn profiles can be used to connect any blog or RSS feed directly to the account. All company, broker and agent profiles should incorporate the company blog into their profiles, to maximize the network distribution of entries made by the marketing department.

**“STATUS UPDATES” FEATURE**
LinkedIn “Status updates” should reference professional activities more than personal events. Consider also using them to suggest "links" to your company website to view inventory or special events.

**CONDUCT YOUR OWN RESEARCH**
Use the Answers area of LinkedIn to conduct research by asking questions to the network. Consider answering others’ questions as well, as an effective method of demonstrating your industry knowledge and expertise.

**STORING AND SHARING FILES**
LinkedIn provides applications for storing and sharing files, as well as specifically uploading presentations (from PowerPoint). While this is an excellent method for providing information and distributing content to your contacts, be sure to restrict access to this content to only those people within your network (rather than the entire network as a whole) so you can manage the access and use of company-specific or proprietary content.

**JOIN OR CREATE “GROUPS”**
Groups are special areas within LinkedIn where users with similar interests can participate in discussions, share news and connect with others to expand their sphere of influence. Companies might consider creating and managing their own groups for internal purposes and/or maintaining a private area for past clients. Agents and brokers should consider joining Groups that can be useful for sharing industry ideas, networking generating referrals and recruiting.

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NOTE: For a company profile your company name/DBA should be written out completely as there are no character minimums.

LinkedIn Help Resources:
http://linkedin.custhelp.com/

Share industry ideas, network, & generate referrals with professionals in the LinkedIn network.
Twitter

TWITTER EXPLAINED
Twitter is a micro-blogging site based around a stream of “updates” and news from users. Profiles generally consist of basic contact information and a “log” of postings much like a journal.

POSTING UPDATES
When posting an update, called a “tweet,” users are restricted to approximately 140 characters. The use of abbreviations is normal in this medium.

- Make your postings resourceful, interesting or relevant. Avoid posting purely mundane comments.

CONNECTING OTHER NETWORKS TO YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT
User can also connect other networks (such as Facebook or a blog) to their account, so that updates on those networks are “duplicated” into the Twitter environment instantly.

- Connect your company blog to a Twitter account to maximize exposure of new postings.

MONITOR YOUR “FOLLOWERS”
“Followers” represent contacts who have found you on Twitter and are watching your postings. Consider setting your account to “Protect” your updates, so that only Followers that you approve can see your updates; otherwise, anyone who searches for you on Twitter can immediately see and monitor your postings without your approval.

MONITOR WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING
- Follow other Twitterers with similar interests, including clients and agents, so you can participate in their discussions or monitor them for research.

KEEPING MESSAGES PRIVATE
Use the “Direct Message” feature to respond to someone privately if you don’t think the rest of the network needs to see your interaction.

CREATE MOMENTUM
Consider re-posting others’ interesting postings into your network, to create momentum and discussion.

- Be sure to check any links, photos or files in another person’s posting on Twitter before re-publishing it to your followers.
- Always cite the original posting when you re-post a tweet. For example, use “From @profile” before republishing the rest of their entry to your network.

KEEPING MESSAGES PRIVATE
Use a Twitter search engine to monitor for others who are using Twitter to discuss your company or brand.

SOME SOCIAL NETWORKS CAN BE USEFUL FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES.
Consider using Twitter to conduct “mini” polls to monitor market trends, by asking your network a question regularly.

SHORTEN LONG URLS
Shorten your posting of URLs by using a service like TinyURL.com.

Help Resources:
http://help.twitter.com/portal

NOTE: For a company profile your company name/DBA may be abbreviated to the standard approved format SmytheJonesSIR if your full DBA does not fit

This communication form should be reserved for “newsy” tidbits that will grab the interest of the reader. You can post to Twitter with e-mail, from your website, or by text message.

-RISMEDIA, June 2009
You Tube is a free online video streaming service that allows anyone to view and share videos that have been uploaded by its members.

**SEPARATION OF PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ACCOUNTS**
Remember that if you subscribe to others' video channels or mark other videos as favorites, these can be seen on your profile by other users in YouTube. Consider using a personal account separate from the company YouTube account channel.

**CREATE A COMPANY ACCOUNT**
With a company, you can host and manage all marketing and listing video clips.
- Develop a company “Channel” on YouTube to manage your videos, comments and friends more selectively than the basic YouTube account. You can also customize the Channel design to reflect your marketing parameters.
- Use your company logo for a Channel Image
- Upload a background or image to customize the page

**HELP VIEWERS FIND YOUR VIDEO**
Use clear and concise names and descriptions for your videos.
- Add “tags” describing your video and making it easier to find by searching
- Use the mapping function to “map” the location of your video for people who search by location.
- Add videos to the appropriate Category so others can find them easily.

**RESTRICTING VIEWERS AND COMMENTS ON YOUR VIDEO**
To restrict access to a video, mark it as “Private” and share it only with approved users by listing them in the video’s Privacy section.

If appropriate, disable “commenting” on certain videos where you do not wish the public to provide feedback which can be seen by all. Depending upon the content, feedback may not be useful on certain videos.

YouTube users can be allowed to “respond” to your video by posting their own video; you can control this feature (on/off) on a per-video basis.

**INCREASING VIEWS**
When friends subscribe or post comments, be sure to respond to them and encourage them to invite their friends to subscribe or view your videos as well.

**RESTRICTING VIEWERS FROM USING YOUR VIDEO**
Depending upon the video, and usually for listing or proprietary video content, consider disabling the “embedding” function so other users cannot incorporate your video into their own websites or other unauthorized areas.
- Videos may still be “shared” with others by email or posting to social networks.

**MAKE SURE YOUR VIDEO CAN BE VIEWED ON MOST DEVICES**
Be sure to enable “Syndication” after uploading each video, so it can be accessed and played on most mobile telephones and television channels.

**CONNECTING OTHER NETWORKS TO YOUR YOUTUBE ACCOUNT**
Connect your YouTube account to your Facebook page, so videos are automatically republished into your Facebook account.

Also, after uploading a video to YouTube, be sure to share it through your other social networks and post it to your company blog.

Remember to obtain permission from clients before posting property videos on YouTube in any fashion.

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**NOTE:** For a company profile your company name/DBA should be written out completely as there are no character minimums.
CREATE SUCCESSFUL BLOGGING CONTENT
Be sure to combine both “marketing” and “resourceful” blog entries. Consumers wish to find relevant and helpful information, as well as potential real estate property opportunities. Experiment with the different mixes of short articles and listing/sales announcements.

Consider creating multiple “authors” for your blog, including different perspectives from various “aspects” of your organization, such as sales, marketing, customer service, finance, leadership, etc.

Consider incorporating multiple formats into your blog. Text, images and graphics are usual media on most blogs. Incorporate recorded podcasts and video messages wherever possible, to create excitement and attract consumer’s attention.

REVIEW RESPONSES BEFORE THEY GO “LIVE”
If you allow commenting from readers on the blog, consider filtering and reviewing the responses before posting them automatically. You can set your blog’s features to “hold” all submitted comments for review before they are posted online. This provides an opportunity to maintain quality controls over the interaction on your site.

PARTICIPATING ON OTHER BLOGS
When participating on other blogs, make your comments in an honest but cooperative fashion. Even when you may disagree with a blog entry, post your thoughts in a constructive manner. Remember, your comments will also be seen by others online, and they represent your “presence” as much as your own blog entries or social network profiles.

CONNECTING YOUR BLOG TO OTHER SOCIAL NETWORKS
Incorporate your blog’s RSS’s feed into other social networks, so your blog entries can be immediately picked up by your friends and connections in other platforms.

INCREASE TRAFFIC TO YOUR BLOG OR WEBSITE
Use a “sharing” function in your blog, so readers can post entries they like into sharing sites like Digg, Reddit, or other social bookmarking websites. This can create ancillary and free traffic back to your blog or website.

BROKERS, MANAGERS AND MARKETING DIRECTORS CAN INTEGRATE BLOGS INTO EXISTING COMPANY WEBSITES
This will maximize the “attraction” power of your blog entries to expose readers to your services and inventory. It will also help search engine optimization based upon your blog’s entries to drive traffic to one site instead of two.

Develop guidelines for blogging at your company. Determine key performance approaches, such as:

- Will you encourage agents to write their own blogs, or enable them to re-blog your company-written content by your marketing department?
- Will you permit third parties to re-publish your blog content on other sites? Weigh the opportunity to capture new traffic against the potential loss of control over your blogging content, as well as ability to monitor comments from the public when your content appears on another site.
- Create a blogging calendar and stick to it. Ensure timely content is added to your blog no less than three times per week.

REMEMBER: “Sotheby’s” may never be used alone as an abbreviation or representation of your company name or affiliation.
About the Author
Matthew Ferrara is CEO of Matthew Ferrara and Company, a global real estate brokerage consulting and training firm. For more than twenty years, Matthew Ferrara and Company has helped brokers and agents maximize the potential of sales, marketing and technology opportunities in the rapidly evolving real estate industry. Matthew Ferrara and Company works with brokerages to develop new standards of performance in sales, marketing and management operations, including the use of emerging marketing mediums such as social networking. For more information about Matthew Ferrara and Company, visit www.matthewferrara.com