

2019 SOCIAL MEDIA FORECAST

A Homebuilder's Guide to Effective Digital Marketing



#GetCommunity

Introduction:

Here at Get Community, we're always staying on top of the latest trends, best practices, and most efficient ways to accomplish relevant marketing strategies for our clients in the homebuilding industry.

Social media in particular is ALWAYS changing, which means our busy team of tweeters and 'grammers is constantly researching the latest updates, and how we can better utilize the most popular platforms for your communities.

As we approach 2019, we wanted to take a deeper look at all of the awesome new tools and features coming onto the scene, and how they will help us produce engaging content that will have audiences clicking, reading, and sharing.

Scroll down to see what we found!



Coming Soon to Instagram...

When it comes to promoting a product, Instagram is quickly becoming the ultimate marketing tool for brands and companies across the board. Here's what we can look forward to in 2019:

1. IGTV is going to blow up!:

IGTV will become a big competitor for YouTube, with new features included, such as vertical video format. Long-form content (3-minute videos and longer) is increasing in popularity and importance for SEO content. (Source: Adweek)

An increase in video content will make this platform useful to homebuilders looking to make an impactful connection with consumers.

2. Expect to see more Instagram Stories and Story Ads!:

Stories are more authentic in their communication, and other platforms, like Facebook, are trying to jump on board in order to reach their goal of creating authentic relationships. For homebuilders, this is a great opportunity to get into a format that most users are gravitating towards and show a unique side of the homebuilding process!

Instagram Stories will be used to their full marketing potential! As of now, blogs and videos are doing really well on stories, and since ads are shorter, we have a better chance of hooking the audience with a short video versus an image.

"Our data shows that businesses are leveraging Instagram for advertising more than ever before. The share of Instagram ads placements is clearly on the rise, reaching 43% in March 2018. This means that out of all the ads marketers launched on Facebook and Instagram, almost half were run on the latter platform." (Source: Adweek)

47% of users find that Instagram Stories help them be more authentic in their communication with friends and family, something Facebook would love to encourage on its flagship product, too. (Source: Buffer)

3. Micro-brands will dominate the platform:

Instagram favors interaction and storytelling, and it is quite different from other news-oriented social media platforms. This is why it has become one of the BEST content distribution channels for micro-brands. (Source: Adweek)

Once homebuilders start to see themselves as microbrands rather than large scale corporations, they can connect more deeply with a local audience through quick responses and more relevant content. This local audience will be more beneficial in the long run because you create more trust with an audience that is willing to engage and share your brand with friends.

4. E-commerce Shops (a.k.a. shoppable posts):

The easiest and most effective way to sell items on Instagram is via shoppable posts, which are available for single static images and Stories.

There are many features you can use in order to test your sales on Instagram. You can use the above-mentioned shoppable posts and, at the same time, you can tag products in Stories. Since every audience is different, we recommend testing several features and settling for the one that fits your strategy and overall goals. (Source: Adweek)

A Facelift for Facebook!

The most popular social media platform will be dishing out some new features! Here's a glimpse into the foreseeable future:

1. The rise of chatbots in private messages:

For homebuilders, chatbots are a great tool to use in private messages, because they allow a very quick response to certain types of questions. They are a more efficient and cost-effective way of connecting with users that want straightforward answers. (Example: "What time is your sales center open today?")

By 2020, **85% of customer** interactions are predicted to be handled by chatbots. (Source: Curtis Tredway)

2. Long-form content engagement will increase:

Long-form content, such as blogs, will become more popular on Facebook specifically because of its share feature. It's important for homebuilders to continue to create blogs that people on Facebook want to share!

3. Facebook Stories and Ads:

Video is where it's at! Ten-to fifteen-second videos will be important to hook in audiences quicker.

FACT: Homebuyers in their mid-30s are on Facebook more than other platforms, so it will be beneficial for homebuilders to connect with that audience.



Priority Shift with Pinterest

It's not just about *building your board count*, it's about *what's in the board that counts!*

1. Pinterest is shifting its priority to produce quality content:

Like most online platforms, Pinterest is constantly tweaking and improving their service.

In 2017, some of the most noticeable changes were the introduction of hashtags, board sections, visual search, and the removal of likes and repin counts.

So far in 2018, we've seen a massive update to best practices: the introduction of the new "following" feed and the first five pins priority distribution, a new profile look, and (rolling out now) new look pin stats that are in near-real-time.

With all of these changes, it's impossible to predict with certainty the direction Pinterest SEO is going to take for 2019. If they loosely follow the evolution of the Google algorithm, it's possible that we'll see a crackdown on:

- Duplicate content (likely already in the works with pin canonicalization and near-real-time stats, which will combine data from all instances of a pin on Pinterest).
- Keyword stuffing
- Penalties for pinning irrelevant content (Source: Persuasion Nation)

With its Smart Search tool, Pinterest shows us that it is prioritizing quality content that fits users' interests. Duplicate content and hacking the algorithm will not work as well in 2019.

For homebuilders, it is a great opportunity to invest in high-quality, cross-functional content to put in front of a highly motivated audience. People are planning for their dream homes and plotting their futures on Pinterest. If they are interested in buying a new home, make sure you take advantage of the Smart Search tool by creating high-quality content for interested users.

2. Tailwind Tribes:

Tribes are a way to share relevant content with marketers and others that are also using the Tailwind app.

The benefit is our ability to efficiently find and share relevant content with our followers to increase our engagement.

By using this app, we are able to create our own Tribes to efficiently share curated content that homebuyers are interested in pinning. Tribes are also able to work cohesively with Pinterest's algorithm to share content of the highest quality.

A Bright Future for YouTube

Are you showcasing your communities on the most popular video content platform in the world? 2019 is the year to start!

1. 360-degree videos are on the rise, alongside virtual reality (Source: Voice Bunny):

These will be especially useful to homebuilders because they can fully showcase models and create high-quality content.

2. Videos don't only have to focus on selling and promoting to reap monetary rewards:

E-learning videos can benefit both clients and employees! These videos will be beneficial for millennials, especially with understanding the process of purchasing a home. (Source: Voice Bunny)

Text-Message Marketing

This is a marketing tool we're really excited to use with our clients in 2019!

1. There is huge potential for text-message marketing in the homebuilding industry:

Homebuilders are currently not using text-message marketing, and those that do take advantage of this platform will be able to connect with audiences in a variety of ways.

2. Some quick numbers:

Text messages have a **98% open rate**.

For millennials, text messaging is a **preferred method** of communication with businesses.

82% of text messages are read within five minutes, but consumers only open one in four emails they receive. (Source: TextMagic.com)

75% of people would like to have offers sent to them **via text**.

66% of people subscribed to mobile marketing have **made a purchase** as a result of receiving a text message.

SMS reminders can increase the attendance rate to an event by **45%**.
(Source: Digital Marketing Magazine)



General Digital Trends

Here are some other beneficial marketing tools to consider for next year:

1. The rise of smart speakers:

65% of smart speaker owners say they wouldn't want to return to the days without their voice-controlled assistant! This will impact homebuilders because voice search will be a new frontier for SEO marketing.

We will likely see more and more online publications embrace voice and publish audio content. There will be a time when advertising will come heavily into play, and we will be able to find a way to target certain people who are using these smart speakers, i.e. video ads or audio ads (podcast suggestions would be an example of audio ads).

(Source: Social Report)

2. Video will continue to be incredibly important, specifically short video:

The importance of video cannot be understated according to HubSpot. Simply adding a video to an email can boost click-through rates by a staggering 200–300 percent, and putting one on a landing page increases conversion rates by **80 percent!** (Source: Smart Insights)

There will be a heavy push for short videos on Instagram and Facebook Stories, as well as YouTube non-skippable ads. The best way to attract a customer is to be able to create content that attracts a user in less than five seconds (we can use client videos and edit them down) -- homebuilders need to be able to showcase product quickly and take advantage of wonderful footage of their homes!

Snack Ads are short videos less than 10 seconds long. **89% of the audience** is engaged during ads below 10 seconds. By the time the video is shown for 60 seconds, almost half of the audience loses interest.

(Source: Curtis Tredway)

It's hip to be square. Thankfully, this marketing trend is easy to keep up with by creating videos in a square format. When Instagram launched, it was right on top of this. At first, the new square format seemed alien, but now it's commonplace. When it comes to Facebook, square videos occupy **78% more** space in the news section and receive a higher percentage of engagement. (Source: Voice Bunny)

We will be developing more square virtual tours and client testimonials to cater to mobile users in 2019.

3. Live Video will continue to grow!:

In fact, in 2016 more than **80% of internet users** watched a significant amount of live video than the year prior—likely due to the rise of more modern streaming services.

In 2019, we will continue to have live videos at Grand Opening events and with our own GC assets. Live video gives homebuilders the opportunity to showcase homes and their company in a more authentic way.

4. 360 video and photos:

Homebuilders should take full advantage of showcasing their products with this exciting new medium, as model homes are ideal for 360 technology.



BONUS: We have a 360 camera!

5. Long-form content will be even more important next year:

Search engines will reward lengthier posts in results rankings, and readers will be looking for more trustworthy sources. Generally speaking, content should be over **2,000 words** to be considered long-form.

A recent analysis by BuzzSumo of over **100 million articles** revealed that long-form content tends to get more social shares than short-form content. Moreover, the longer the content, the greater the likelihood it will be shared. (Source: Forbes)

Long-form is where the benefits of blogs come into play. Customers love that personal touch and will want to read something they can trust.

In recent years, businesses have increasingly embraced the use of chatbots for personalizing and increasing customer engagement. Grand View Research predicts that the chatbot industry will grow significantly as enterprises are enabled to substantially reduce operating costs. Further, improvements in machine-learning technology and artificial intelligence mean chatbot features are becoming more adaptable, and likable, by consumers. (Source: Forbes)

We look forward to exploring all of these exciting possibilities with you in 2019! Keep following along with us on our blog and social media channels to stay up to date on digital marketing best practices. You can also catch us on Facebook Live every Friday at 10:00 a.m.!

