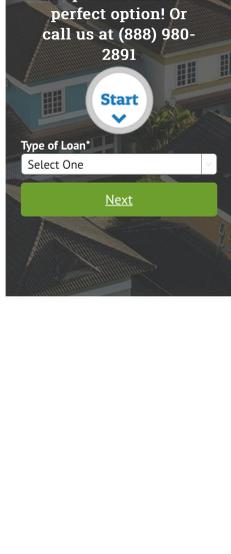
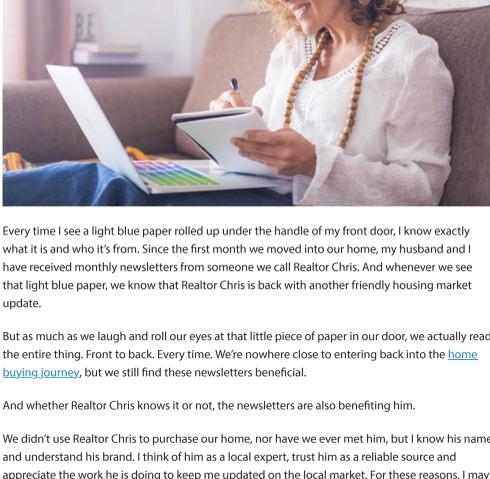


Creating Content For Every Stage In The Home Buyer Journey

by Lauren Nowacki | November 20, 2019 | Industry Insider
 Home Buying Real Estate Agents



Every time I see a light blue paper rolled up under the handle of my front door, I know exactly what it is and who it's from. Since the first month we moved into our home, my husband and I have received monthly newsletters from someone we call Realtor Chris. And whenever we see that light blue paper, we know that Realtor Chris is back with another friendly housing market update.

But as much as we laugh and roll our eyes at that little piece of paper in our door, we actually read the entire thing. Front to back. Every time. We're nowhere close to entering back into the [home buying journey](#), but we still find these newsletters beneficial.

And whether Realtor Chris knows it or not, the newsletters are also benefitting him.

We didn't use Realtor Chris to purchase our home, nor have we ever met him, but I know his name and understand his brand. I think of him as a local expert, trust him as a reliable source and appreciate the work he is doing to keep me updated on the local market. For these reasons, I may even consider hiring him as my agent when we decide to sell our home. All because of a monthly newsletter.

The Value Of Creating Content For Home Buyers

Creating content through the various stages of the home buying journey provides valuable information to clients, helps them stay in touch with their agents and helps get them to the closing table.

"The home buying process can be quite daunting for most people," says Ron Humes, 20-year realty veteran and VP of Operations for [Post Modern Marketing](#). "The best way to alleviate fear, confusion or missed task deadlines through the home buying journey is to keep the lines of communication open."

When a client has an easier home buying journey, it doesn't go unnoticed. "The more seamless and stress-free you can make the transaction for your buyer, the more likely they will refer you in the future," says Humes.

Getting clients to the closing table and gaining more referrals aren't the only benefits content creation has for real estate agents.

"It's important to create content for clients because it builds trust and your brand," says [Matthew Jaycox](#), a REALTOR® in Northwest Arkansas. "It makes you memorable, which is crucial for sustaining long-term business – especially in a heavily saturated market like real estate. It'll separate you from your competition."

[Rick Albert](#), a REALTOR® with LAMERICA Real Estate in Los Angeles, agrees. "There are so many [agents] out there and it seems like everyone knows at least three agents. Therefore, providing interesting and important content is key to setting yourself apart," he says. Albert also notes another important benefit of content creation – it makes your clients feel like they are important and top of mind. "[My clients] need to know that I'm working for them, even when they are off doing other things," Albert says.

Content also gets clients working for you – and in their best interests, of course.

"In general, content is provided to elicit a response from the end-user," says Humes. "The response could be completing a task, clicking a 'like, follow or subscribe' button or completing a purchase."

The Home Buyer Journey And Marketing Funnel Stages

What is the home buyer's journey? It's the steps a person will go through and the experiences they'll have when they are buying a house. When creating content, consider what the homebuyer experiences in this journey and apply it to the marketing funnel stages.

If you're not familiar with the four marketing funnel stages, they are:

- Awareness
- Intent
- Decision
- Loyalty and Advocacy

When applying this to the customer journey, here's what that looks like:

Awareness. In the home buyer's journey, this involves general research, preparing for costs and fees and shopping around for a mortgage.

Intent. In this stage, the buyer is finding a real estate agent, getting approved for a mortgage and beginning their search for a new home.

Decision. It's this step of the home buyer's journey that the big, important actions take place. The buyer narrows down their search, puts in an offer, schedules an appraisal and inspection and closes on the home.

Loyalty and Advocacy. Though your client has closed on their home, the journey isn't over. In this stage, they're looking for information on maintaining their home and sharing their home buying experience with others. If the experience was positive, they may even refer you or use you again the next time they purchase a home, starting the journey all over.

Use these stages for your content marketing funnel to develop the right topics for each piece of content you make.

Creating Content For Every Stage Of The Home Buyer Journey

As a real estate agent, you want to provide support and encouragement through your client's entire process. Here's how to do that in each stage.

Awareness

At this point, the client will typically be entertaining the idea of purchasing a new home. They'll begin gathering information on what the [home buying process](#) is and what is required of them to purchase a home. In this stage, they are preparing for what's to come and may not even have an agent or mortgage lender yet.

The type of content you want to create here is educational. Not only does this help the buyer prepare for their journey; it also establishes you as an expert from the get-go. You don't want to overwhelm the client with too much information or scare them away, so keep it lighter and more generic. You won't need to get in the weeds on appraisals, inspections, underwriting and other experiences that are complicated or further in the process. Instead, provide content around the following topics:

- Tips for preparing to buy a house
- Reasons you should shop around for a lender
- Information on what you need to qualify for a mortgage
- A list of recommended lenders
- Ways to get the best rates on a mortgage
- Advice on saving for a down payment and closing costs

Send this content to your referrals, subscribers and leads you've received from other marketing campaigns. You'll also want to post it somewhere online, so other potential clients outside of your reach may stumble upon it. More on that later.

Intent

When a home buyer enters this stage of the journey, they've decided to purchase a home and are starting to take action. If you aren't their real estate agent yet, they'll decide to hire you in at this time. They'll also get preapproved for a mortgage, determine how much home they can afford, and consider what they want, need and wish to avoid in a home. They'll share these pieces of information with you and you'll be able to get to work finding their dream home.

Because house hunting is one of the most important, exciting and time-consuming parts of the process, home listings may be the majority of the content you offer at this stage. But it should involve more than sending out a new listing every now and then. According to Humes, "Emails that contain listing information should be delivered immediately as new listings are placed on the market that meet your buyer's criteria."

[Travis Carroll](#), a licensed real estate salesperson in New York City, recommends enhancing this type of content with information that's custom fit for your client.

"You can send a listing with points and highlights about the property and specifically why it is right or wrong for [your clients] based on what they have told you," he says. "Sending each single listing with a little write up of why you think they will or will not like it is a huge part of being their go-to person. As an agent, we can often see what the client wants even though they might not see as clearly. Every new listing you send, point out things they have told you they want and need. Don't be afraid to point out something negative and, if possible, provide an idea for the solution. Pointing out the negatives shows them you have their best interest in mind."

According to Carroll, it's that little something extra that goes such a long way. "Short but detailed notes are very important in showing clients that you listen and understand them," he says. "So many agents just send listings or have them auto send, but the personal touch goes a long way when they tell their friends and co-workers how much you listened and helped them get exactly what they want."

Other content to include in this stage may include:

- Tips for determining how much house you can afford
- A list of what to look for during a walkthrough
- A list of questions to ask about the home
- Information on how to make a competitive offer

Carroll also recommends sending content based around in-contract and sold properties as they occur. This will help justify area pricing and build a sense of urgency.

Decision

The decision stage is the most important and, sometimes, stressful part of the home buyer's journey. It's when clients choose the home they want to buy, put in an offer and, hopefully, close on the home. Many of the agents we interviewed agreed that this is the stage in the journey when clients are most engaged. It's at this time that your clients have committed to buying a home and are even under contract to do so. As they move toward the closing process, they will be required to do a lot of the work, so it's important to create content that helps them complete it.

"Once a home is contracted for your buyer, the content should be actionable items to complete the transaction," recommends Humes. A few of those actionable items he's referring to are: scheduling a home inspection, providing financial documents to their lender, staying in constant contact with their lender, doing a final walkthrough and closing on the home.

Such topics to include when creating content for this stage are:

- Reasons why you should get an inspection
- What type of inspection to get and questions to ask your inspector
- Information on home appraisals
- A list of documents the lender may ask for during the underwriting process
- Tips for conducting the final walkthrough of the home
- A breakdown of potential closing costs
- Information on [what to expect at closing](#)
- A list of what to bring to bring to closing day

Along with this helpful, educational content, you may also want to consider sending gentle reminders to your clients whenever they need to complete an action. Once they have a closing date, send a countdown to keep them motivated and excited.

Loyalty And Advocacy

What you do *after* your client buys their home is just as important as what you do *while* they're buying it. It is in this stage of the journey that your client becomes a homeowner and your source for referrals and repeat business. During this stage, you want to create content that helps you [retain your clients](#) and get new ones through their referrals.

"Following the closing of the home, an agent should try to deliver relevant and meaningful content to the buyer on a regular frequency," recommends Humes. "As they say, 'out of sight, out of mind.' Make certain the home buyer knows you are still in the business and there for their personal, family, friend and colleague referrals.

To stay in sight and in mind, try creating content that provides value to your client, makes them feel valued and asks them to take action. If you need ideas, here are a few to start:

- A message congratulating your on their new home
- An invitation to follow you on social media for more information and tips on homeownership
- A message that thanks clients for working with you and asks them for referrals
- Happy holiday messages
- Birthday cards for the whole family
- Seasonal home maintenance tips
- Home decoration tips
- A list of recommended local businesses for homeownership needs including HVAC, plumbing, home improvement, roofing and more
- A list of local restaurants and other hidden gems in the area

Types Of Content To Create

Now that you have a plethora of topics for creating content for every stage of the home buying journey, here are a few different types of content to try out:

- Blog posts
- How-to guides
- E-books
- Infographics
- Printables (checklists, budget sheets, calendar pages, etc.)
- Videos
- Podcasts
- Emails
- Flyers
- Electronic or printed newsletters

Consider using a few different types of content since people receive and process information in different ways. Some people are visual or auditory learners, while others are reading/writing or kinesthetic learners. Always test your different types of content to see what best resonates with your clients.

How To Share Your Content

"The way in which you attempt to communicate with your buyers can be just as critical as the content you provide," says Humes. Luckily for real estate agents, the digital age has made sharing content on multiple platforms simple and quick. Here are a few ways to share your content:

- Create [email lists](#) for the various stages of the home buyer journey to share generic content relevant to that stage.
- Email clients individual messages customized for their specific situation and needs.
- Post on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube and [Instagram](#).
- Create printouts to share at open houses or in-person meetings with your clients.

When it comes to sharing content with your clients, get to know them and their preferences before going overboard.

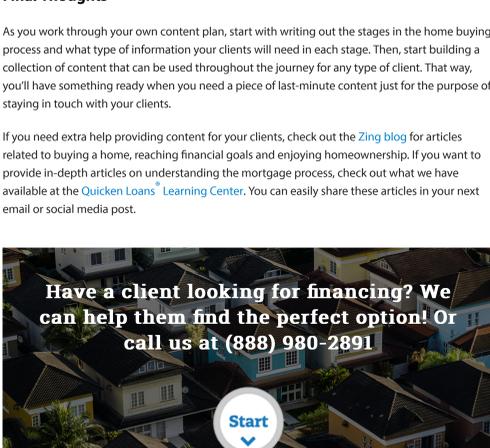
"Some people prefer to be left alone and let a professional handle everything. [They may] only want to get updated when it comes to pertinent documents, significant dates and negotiations," says Jaycox. "Others like to be involved down to every minute detail and development that will normally go on throughout a transaction. As a real estate agent, you'll learn quickly how to read people."

You could also just ask. "People today are extremely busy with their professional and personal lives," says Humes. "Be sure to ask the buyer early how they would prefer to receive your messages and communication."

Final Thoughts

As you work through your own content plan, start with writing out the stages in the home buying process and what type of information your clients will need in each stage. Then, start building a collection of content that can be used throughout the journey for any type of client. That way, you'll have something ready when you need a piece of last-minute content just for the purpose of staying in touch with your clients.

If you need extra help providing content for your clients, check out the [Zing! blog](#) for articles related to buying a home, reaching financial goals and enjoying homeownership. If you want to provide in-depth articles on understanding the mortgage process, check out what we have available at the [Quicken Loans Learning Center](#). You can easily share these articles in your next email or social media post.



Type of Loan*

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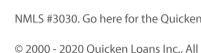
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