

CASE STUDY:

\$1.4 Billion Real Estate Company Climbs the Search Ranks

Location Traffic Builds Local Search Awareness and Drives New Leads



The Problem: A Low Performing Digital Presence

Over 85% of real estate transactions start online, so it's not hard to understand why the agents at this \$1.4 billion real estate company complained that their site didn't appear on the first page for relevant web searches.

Despite the fact that the company had served the New Jersey area for more than 35 years with 21 offices and over 750 sales associates, Google wasn't recognizing it for searches related to NJ real estate. It was a major problem for the company.

"I knew we had to do something quickly to get our website and our offices visible to the public," said Marketing Director Heidi Dittloff. "Our firm hired Shepard Morrow from Location Traffic to review our analytics and develop an SEO strategy, and an internet marketing plan to improve our search results for our site. We worked together developing a strategy that would attack the low-hanging fruit first."

Based on our proposal, the company hired us for an audit to make more detailed suggestions and eventually to implement the plan for them.

The Approach: Driving Traffic to Each Office Location

Location Traffic started by conducting an audit of their Google Analytics, extensive background research into keywords, and analysis of competitors, such as Diane Turton Realtors, Coldwell Banker Real Estate, Weichert Realtors, and Callaway Henderson Sotheby's International Realty. We analyzed three main areas to look for opportunities: organic search, local business listings, and their website design.



We saw that, while competitors had strong holds over many related keywords, such as “NJ real estate,” there were potential opportunities to realize immediate results for keywords related to “real estate offices” with more specific geographic qualifiers.

We viewed this as similar to a retailer with multiple locations, which we already had a wealth of experience with. The goal was to drive leads to each location, so we implemented a Local Search campaign around each office location.

This involved using a combination of on-page optimization or Landing pages, and internet SEO strategies.

For multiple location management, one of the greatest challenges in internet marketing efforts is managing business listings. It’s not a simple task to ensure that information is accurate and consistent for all 21 offices across all the top business listing directories, but it’s key to improving search rankings for specific locations. We started there by adding them to directories where they had no listing, and updating data for their existing data, creating a strong NAP (Name, Address, and Phone Number) profile for search engines.

On their website, we focused entirely on making it work as hard as possible for those office pages, with the goal of realizing fast results. This meant rewriting some content on the office pages to optimize them for relevant keywords as well as altering the site’s linking structure and updating Meta data related to those locations and their listings. We didn’t reinvent the wheel; we used what was there to drive Google’s focus where we wanted using keyword-rich content.

The Next Step: Creating a Coordinated Marketing Strategy

At Location Traffic, we emphasize looking at the big picture. No single internet marketing tactic exists in a vacuum. Every piece should work together to help achieve your ultimate goal. In this case, we wanted to ensure that these new visitors landed on a website that provided a user-friendly experience and was more likely to convert.

The company didn’t want or need a complete website redesign. Instead we suggested changes that we believed would yield the biggest bang for their buck.

First, I recommended that they upgrade their website to a mobile-friendly responsive design. My goal here was two-fold. First, I knew that Google had spoken about the importance it placed on mobile users, so it would be a good change to undertake to please the search engine. Second, mobile use is on the rise – in fact, it recently surpassed desktop use – so I wanted to ensure that these users had a smooth experience on the site.

This proved to be a very good move for the company, since only a few short months later Google announced Mobilegeddon, an algorithm which penalized sites that were not mobile-friendly. As a result, the real estate company was already compliant. They saved money and headaches since they didn’t

have to rush to make any changes, and it ensured that they wouldn't fall behind other competitors that were mobile-friendly.

We also recommended a redesign to the home page to make it more effective as a landing page and improve SEO considerations. Location Traffic created several different versions and worked with the Dittloff to select the best one, which was then implemented.

The Results: A Successful Campaign

Before we began our campaign, we determined that the metric to focus on in order to see if we were successful was new users. Why? Because as a real estate agency, most of their repeat web traffic was from their 750 agents and their existing clients doing lookups for new properties on the market. Any change to this number wasn't helping them with their goal: finding new clients. The 'new users' metric, on the other hand, was likely to be the best indicator of whether new people were finding the site.

And when we looked at changes for a 7-month period year-over-year, we found:

- 155% increase in organic traffic
- 33.8% increase in new users
- 80% increase in direct traffic
- Increases in social and referral traffic as well

With a modest campaign, we realized significant results that drove new leads their way – and made their agents happy.

“Shepard worked well with a select group of our office managers and website hosting company while creating a team environment by giving our managers input on the project,” said Dittloff. “His ability to work quickly and efficiently really helped the project run smoothly and delivered the results we needed.”

Future Recommendations to Grow Their Business

Location Traffic is proud of the results we realized in such a short time, and we hope to continue this trajectory for the real estate company.

A few of our future recommendations include:

- Implementing long-term SEO strategies to improve their ranking for other important geographic keywords
- Improving their social media presence, an area where their competition is showing much stronger returns, in order to help them maintain relationships with past clients, drive referrals and word-of-mouth, and assist with SEO

With the basics in place, it's easier to pinpoint and seize more opportunities to attract additional leads and improve conversion rates.

Interested in getting a proposal or site audit from Location Traffic? Request a free consultation through our [contact form](#) or call 609-737-8667.