

NEW TECH FOR OLDER PROS

By John Salustri

You've heard it all before, in conference presentations and magazine articles, how young professionals can reverse-mentor senior team members on the use of technology. There would seem to be a world of marketing methods that are passing you by but embraced enthusiastically by a new generation of brokers born with cell phones in their ears.

We reached out to a tech-savvy young professional, John M. Adams III, principal broker for Cushman & Wakefield | Cornerstone in Knoxville, Tenn., and chair of the SIOR Digital Media and Communication Committee, to gauge his success with tech and found that selective use is key. You don't need to become a master of Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Pinterest, says Adams: "The important thing is not try to do it all but focus on one or two things and master those." Or even find someone on your team who can do them for you, he suggests.

Adams himself takes out various online opportunities for test drives, to judge their effect, as he is right now with Pinterest and Instagram, two sites where you can post pictures of properties you're promoting.

Whatever venue you choose, he urges, choose something. "It's the way of the world," he says, "and the market is changing. Being an early adopter, you are looked at as an innovator, and you set yourself and your property apart from others," which after all, is the key to any good marketing campaign. That used to be the purpose of ads in the Wall Street Journal, he argues. But as opposed to the "big bucks" of a newspaper ad, "Marketing materials now typically involve a marginal upfront investment," if anything at all.

It's important to keep in mind as well that all technology is used as support tools. "The biggest thing with technology is to know when to use it and when not to," advises Adams. "There are a lot of people younger than I am right out of college who don't know how to communicate, how to look you in the eye and have a one-on-one conversation. All they know is texting. There's a fine line. Face-to-face interaction is still very important. But there are a lot of opportunities to use a simple text or email or Facebook message to ask for a phone number or the code to enter a building. That's where you have to know you can save time. It's being smart about usage and knowing when to use it and when not to."

With all that said, let's review some of the social media sites one young broker relies on:

FACEBOOK

Adams says Facebook has helped him with a couple of transactions but it is mostly a top-of-mind application. It's a good site for renewing acquaintances, messaging them and posting pictures of new properties or recent deals. "Not all of your clients are using Facebook, and you won't win a lot of business from it, but a meaningful post on your page keeps your name and face in front of someone who may not have seen your ad in the Business Journal."

He agrees that it is hard to determine your return on investment (that's a time investment. The great majority of activity you will see on Facebook is free). The deals he's done via the site were with people who "sent a private message saying they saw the pictures of my kids and needed to reach out about a building they were interested in." He recommends making time for Facebook on a daily basis.

But he also recommends caution. Since it is largely designed for personal interaction, keep a line of distinction between your professional life and what you want to share from your activities after hours.

LINKEDIN

If Facebook is a pair of cutoffs, LinkedIn is a suit and tie. It's not social but business media and a great source for connecting with other professionals. "If we know a renewal is coming up or we're trying to get in front of a tenant, the first thing we do is go to LinkedIn, look up the tenant's name and see if there is someone we know who works there or who we didn't know works there. With LinkedIn we're trying to find that common denominator so we're making a warm call rather than a cold call. I often go to Facebook if I can't find them on LinkedIn.

The caution with LinkedIn is that you need a previous connection to the person you are reaching out to. There's actually a pop-up window that asks you to explain your relationship. "If you don't have the contact, don't try to pretend you do," he warns. "Ultimately they're going to figure it out and that's not how I do business. On the right side of the page,

you can see if there is some connection. You might already know someone who works for that company, so it becomes a game of connecting the dots.” He discovered on LinkedIn that a new neighbor worked for a company he was trying to get in front of. “They had just signed a renewal but said they didn’t know I did leases and would keep my name for the next time.”

While basic use on LinkedIn is free--including the ability to join groups of various professional associations--there are step-ups in activity that are charged. All connection requests have to be approved via email by those you are reaching out to.

TWITTER

A free website wherein members can express themselves in thoughts of 140 characters or less (in entries unfortunately called Tweets), Twitter brought the hashtag to prominence and is, for Adams, a second source of news. “I still read the paper,” he says, “but I scroll through Twitter a couple of times a day to see new articles and updates that are out there.” He follows his favorite writers and newspapers and will re-Tweet (that is, re-circulate) others articles but Tweets primarily at conferences when a salient point is floated during the sessions.

YOUTUBE

Another free site for users posting videos, Adams says he has occasionally posted video tours of properties he’s marketing. “Some people are actually starting to do 3D videos,” he notes. The warning that accompanies YouTube is professionalism. To attract the right kind of attention, there needs to be some production value--which means an upfront cost for the proper equipment, although it need not be elaborate. “You just don’t want it to look like your five-year-old recorded it,” he says. Neither do you want to record an office that’s small or cramped.

Chances are, you’re not going to be Tweeting and posting videos and friending potential clients in a flurry of online activity. Neither does Adams. There are a variety of websites out there for you to enhance your marketing efforts for very little capital, or none at all. Choose what’s right for you. But always keep in mind, if you opt to do nothing but cold call on your rotary-dial land line, that maybe the reason no one is picking up is because they’re too busy texting your competition. ■

CROSSGATE
SAVANNAH | GEORGIA

Manufacturing (Zoned EDZ) ± 256 AC.
Commercial (Zoned PC-3) ± 27 AC.
1/2 Mile From the Port of Savannah
Norfolk Southern Rail
Flexible Lot Sizes

JOHN NEELY, SIOR
Colliers International | Savannah
912 662 8008
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DANNY CHASE, SIOR
Colliers International | Savannah
912 662 8012
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Georgia Ports Authority
Garden City Terminal

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