Do Brokers Know What They Want?

The research presented in this paper explores the foundation decisions that a broker must make regarding the advertising of their listings online, and specifically provides insight into the reasons why brokers choose to send their listings to the maximum number of available publisher websites.

More than 200 broker-owners or principal brokers of real estate firms provided their detailed input to help us understand why they use the “Maximum Marketing” button in the ListHub application to select all sites for advertising their listings. Various industry participants have publicly voiced skepticism about whether brokers who use the blanket feature for sending their listings to all available publishers “have a clue” what they’re doing. The data indicates they do!

“ListHub’s study takes a look at the reasons why brokers make their marketing choice, and underscores ListHub’s continued commitment to support broker choices and control. From an MLS perspective, it is encouraging to know that many of the brokers who choose the broadest possible exposure for their listings are doing so with eyes wide open.”

~ Russ Bergeron, CEO, MRED, LLC

Introduction

Debates continue to surround the advertising of real estate listings online. There is a wide sphere of topics and a broader range of opinions. One mantra, though, typically brings a collective nod of agreement:

**BROKERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO WHAT THEY WANT WITH THEIR OWN LISTINGS**

Listings distribution networks like ListHub provide managed platforms where brokers have choice, information, flexibility, and control over where they choose to advertise their listings online. Ideally, they have a wide variety of options including major real estate portals, niche sites, local options, up-and-comers, and any other legitimate site or app that attracts consumers. Brokers also need resources that conveniently compare sites based on features, practices, consumer traffic metrics and other tools that support the ability for brokers to make choices. All of these tools and resources are available to brokers through ListHub.

The Debate

At ListHub, our philosophy is clear. Brokers should be offered a wide variety of options. If there is a legitimate online advertising venue – one that agrees to manage the listing data appropriately under the basic contractual protections that content owners expect - it should be available through the ListHub platform.

Others have argued that brokers should not be given a choice that distributes their listings to all sites within the network because brokers are not paying attention, and others have gone further suggesting that the MLS should remove Publishers from the network so that brokers don’t have the ability to choose a certain Publisher.

**Given The Options, What Do Brokers Actually Choose To Do?**

Given the breadth of the ListHub Network, we have visibility into the choices that brokers are actually making. Here’s how it works.

By default, once the broker first completes registration for their ListHub account, there are no publishers selected for distribution.

ListHub presents brokers with two clearly described options during the registration sequence. The first option presented is, “Selective Marketing” (where the broker individually chooses each site). The second option is, “Maximize Marketing” (which automatically subscribes the broker to all available destinations).

Two key statistics result from brokers making decisions associated with Selective or Maximum Marketing:

- **50% of the listings in the ListHub platform are part of the Maximum Marketing program.**
- **Even removing the large custom brokers and franchises from this statistic, only 69% of MLS Connected brokers listings are currently included in the Maximum Marketing program – It’s Not Everyone!**
Do Brokers Know What They Are Doing?

Are brokers making an informed choice when they choose Maximum Marketing? As new publisher sites and models have emerged over the years, some industry participants have questioned whether brokers are demonstrating ignorance with their actions when they make these advertising choices.

**DO BROKERS NEED TO BE PROTECTED FROM THEMSELVES?**

So, we asked them. ListHub recently conducted a survey to learn what factors are important to brokers when deciding where to market their listings online. The survey was administered by both phone and email to 200 ListHub brokers who have selected “Maximize Marketing.”

**We Found Out**

**“Were you aware that you selected all of the sites?”**

First, we wanted to find out if these brokers were even aware of their selections. With 83% responding, “Yes,” we learned that the brokers knew the choices they had made.

**“Why did you choose to send your listings to all of the sites in the network?”**

The second question was open-ended. However, we received many similar responses. The common thread for these brokers was the importance of getting the maximum exposure possible:

- I want my listings on all of the sites!
- I wanted the maximum market exposure for my listings.
- Our priority is getting the greatest exposure possible to sell our listings.
- BETTER EXPOSURE
- Broader marketing
- For the greatest possible exposure of listings
- Get the broadest coverage
- I believe it would be a disservice to my clients to not subscribe to all publisher websites… A listing that is not on ListHub, is just another listing!
- I want our listings to get to as many sites as possible, creating more chances for people to view our listings.

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**ListHub Maximum Marketing Survey**

When you created your ListHub account were you aware that you subscribed to all of the publisher websites available in the ListHub network?

- Yes: 83%
- No: 14%
- Not Sure: 3%

Are you pleased with the number of websites available in the ListHub network?

- Yes: 74%
- Not Sure: 5%
- Would like more: 16%
- No: 5%

Do you know how many websites your listings are being sent to?

- Yes: 34%
- No: 32%
- Not Sure: 34%

Did you know when new publisher sites were added to the network your listings would automatically appear on those sites?

- Yes: 64%
- No: 36%
**Survey Questions about New ListHub Features for Marketing Choices**

Last year ListHub made enhancements to help our customers make more informed decisions about where to distribute their listings online.

One feature is Publisher Filters, where brokers can filter sites based on some of the most popular criteria that brokers use to make their advertising choices. The criteria include things like, “Displays Broker Contact Info” and “Doesn’t Re-syndicate Your Listings”; there are 9 filters available in all.

We also added Publisher Settings, which allows brokers to control whether their listings should automatically be sent to future sites that are added to the network, or not. Brokers can even use the filters to specify what types of sites can be automatically added in the future.

Did you know these features for making publisher selections?  

- **Yes**: 62%  
- **Not Sure**: 14%  
- **No**: 24%

Would you be likely to use any of these tools for deciding where to send your listings?  

- **Yes**: 35%  
- **Not Sure**: 49%  
- **No**: 16%

**“Did you know that ListHub makes it easy to select publishers based on easy-to-use filters?”**

With each broker, we shared the details about the features in ListHub that allow brokers to rate and filter publishers based on key criteria and factors that might impact their advertising choices. We found that many brokers (62%) were unaware of the tools, and a smaller percentage (49%) were likely to use the tools.

Still, only 21% say that they plan to make changes to their choices in the near future.

- **Yes**: 41%  
- **Not Sure**: 38%  
- **No**: 21%

**What Else Is Important To Brokers When It Comes To Online Marketing?**

The platform tools provided by the ListHub all emerged as “very important” or “extremely important” in our broker survey:

- **92%** feel strongly that listings should be accurate.  
- **90%** want maximum exposure for their listings.  
- **82%** feel it important to have an MLS connected advertising platform.  
- **84%** want a single place to go for support.  
- **85%** want publishers to follow broker friendly rules on how their listings are managed.  
- **75%** feel it important to have reports on what happened to their listings online.  
- **85%** want maximum exposure for their clients.

**THE FEEDBACK FROM BROKERS IS CLEAR.**

**THEY ARE MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS, AND HAVE VALID REASONS FOR THOSE DECISIONS.**