

## HVREN Goes Google

Contributed by Web Master  
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While as many as 70% to 80% of real Estate shoppers today begin their search on the Internet, Google claims that at least 50% of that market makes direct searches for Real Estate through their search engine. While the Google Real Estate database (which is actually part of a larger system called Google Base), has been under development for a few years and is still in its Beta phase, it has already changed the face of Real Estate marketing on the Web.

Not that long ago, the central player in real estate listings on the Web was Realtor.com, which is run by the National Association of Realtors and acts as a central database for all its member Multiple Listings Services. As such, Realtor.com is only available to Realtors. However, today the predominant force is fast becoming Google Base, which has leveled the playing field by opening Real Estate listing submissions to anyone. In fact, one of the major selling points now for Realtor.com and all the other national Real Estate listing sites is that they submit all of their listings to Google. Anyone wanting to market Real Estate on the Web today must content with and submit to Google Base or risk being left behind.

Hudson Valley Real Estate Network has and just completed the programming which will allow them to submit all of their listings to Google Base. Now, every listing submitted on HVREN, whether its a free or a premium ad, will also be submitted to Google. This system will benefit not only the home and property owners, landlords, and Realtors who advertise on HVREN, but also the site itself by driving its search engine ranking even higher.

For those who are selling, renting, or leasing out their property themselves, the benefits are clear. Now, with one submission on a regionally focussed site like Hudson Valley Real Estate Network, they also get global exposure on Google so they can compete with the level of marketing that Realtors traditionally provided.

On the flip side, they also get the benefit of the local focus of Hudson Valley Real Estate Network. While global exposure sounds like a great thing, the chances that your buyer is presently living in Turkestan are slim (though it can and does happen). You still need the power of regional keyword ranking, reputation, and marketing that Hudson Valley Real Estate Network can provide--not to mention that at this stage of Google Base's development, entering a listing on Hudson Valley Real Estate Network is just simply a much easier and more user-friendly experience.

For Realtors, the benefits of using a site like HVREN.com might not be so clear at first. After all, they've got Realtor.com, their own Web site, local print ads, reputation and following, and if they're one of the national brands, they're pretty much on TV. Why should they waste their time with local Web site?

The answer for them to this question lies in: a) not forgetting that in spite of all this other marketing and exposure, the Web is fast becoming the dominant force in Real Estate today, and b) understanding how the Web really works so they can optimize your presence on it.

Most Realtors would not question advertising in more than one print source, but when it comes to the Web, many think that once they've got an ad or a site on the Web, that's it: they're on the Web for all the world to see. However, while multiple Web ads and links do increase your exposure, that's where the similarity ends. When you advertise in two different papers, nobody gives you extra points for doing so, nor does each paper also get extra points or congratulate each other for both displaying your ad. In fact, print advertisers generally assume the opposite, that other classified advertisers compete with and deplete their readership base rather than augment it. And you're certainly not going to see them sharing ads with each other for free, let alone advertising each other's publications. That just doesn't happen in the "real world."

And yet, when you get on the Web, you step right into the rabbit hole, for this is exactly what does happen. The Web operates on a completely different if not opposite paradigm than the "real world" most Realtors are accustomed to advertising in. Every ad and every link provides more exposure not just in the traditional linear sense, but in nearly exponential terms. And it does so not only for that ad or link, but for every site that posts it. It is, in fact, this interlinking that creates the very fabric of the Web itself. Billions of disconnected sites do not make a "World Wide Web", but merely a global database of electronic billboards.

This is why search engines, which are the vital links to your use and enjoyment of the Web, still reward linking more highly than any other single consideration when determining Search Engine Ranking (SAR). For every link or ad you place on the Web, the SAR of both the Web site you place it on and the Web site the link is for goes up. If a listing comes from both HVREN and Realtor.com to Google Base, its rank goes up, as do all the links contained in that listing and all the names and terms in the listing. One Web site with few links doesn't do it, nor will one ad, even if it's on a major Web

site. When looked at this way, it's not about being on the Web, which one Web site and one ad will give you, but being in the Web, being a part of what builds it.

Links are what build the Web, and the more links you create for yourself, the higher your ranking on the Web is going to be. By placing your ads for you on Google Real Estate, Hudson Valley Real Estate Network helps you maximize your Internet marketing presence with a minimum of effort and financial investment.