

THE OPEN HOUSE GUIDE TO SUCCESS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction
2	The Benefits Of Hosting An Open House
3	Open House Statistics
5	Step 1 How To Quickly Get/Borrow A Listing
6	Step 2 Choose A Date/Time To Host The Open House
7	Step 3 Prepare Your Listing For Market
9	Step 4 Marketing Your Open House
11	Step 5 Prepare The Occupants For Your Open House
12	Step 6 Prepare The Home For Your Open House
13	Step 7 Engage Guests During Your Open House
15	Step 8 Follow Up With Open House Guests
16	Social Distancing Tips For Hosting Open Houses
17	Want To Generate More Real Estate Leads?

INTRODUCTION

Each home, client, transaction, and market is different and unique in their own way. Which means they'll require different strategies to accomplish their goals. As a real estate professional, one decision you'll have to make is whether to host an open house for your client.

In this guide, we'll present open house benefits, statistics, and success stories to show you the value in hosting an open house. To ensure you get the most out of an open house, we've included staging and curb appeal tips. Then we'll cover strategies for the full open house process like acquiring a listing, promoting and marketing the open house, how to set-up, how to host, and how to follow up with contacts

In this edition, we've included a special section on the coronavirus pandemic to address ways to adapt your real estate business to this new environment and ideas to reopen while abiding by state health and safety orders.



THE BENEFITS OF HOSTING AN OPEN HOUSE

Hosting an open house takes time, money, and energy but there are many benefits of hosting one. Implicitly, an open house allows a many potential buyer to experience the home in person as well as an opportunity to meet and interview you – the real estate professional. If they meet you, we know you can charm them into a client.

An open house allows a potential buyer to...

- 1.View an online listing in person.
- 2.Let's them immerse and picture themselves in the home.
- 3.Explore the neighborhood and community.
- 4.Meet and interview a real estate professional.
- 5.Share contact information with you to stay in touch.
- 6.Learn about new listings that can be viewed through you.
- 7.Find a real estate professional to sell their home.
- 8.Make an offer on the home.



OPEN HOUSE STATISTICS

In this section, we'll cover relevant open house statistics from [National Association of REALTORS' 2018 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers report](#) to see how often open houses are used during a home search, the age breakdown of open house users, usefulness, where buyers found the home they purchased, and where buyers found the real estate agent they hired for their transaction.

Information Sources Used in Home Search

Open houses were the fourth most used information source with 53% of all home buyers attending them during their home search.

	ALL BUYERS	FIRST-TIME BUYERS	REPEAT BUYERS	NEW HOMES	PREVIOUSLY OWNED HOMES
Online Websites	93%	94%	92%	89%	94%
Real Estate Agent	86%	86%	87%	78%	88%
Mobile or Tablet Search Device	73%	80%	69%	64%	75%
Open House	53%	50%	54%	61%	51%

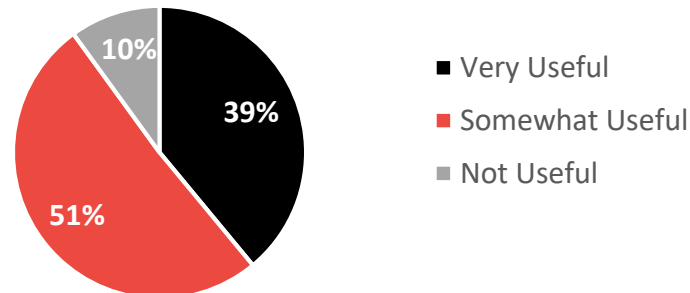
Age Breakdown of Open House Users

Open houses were the most popular among the 25 to 44 age group with 55% of them attending at least one, while the 18 to 25 age group attended them the least at 44%.

ALL BUYERS	18 TO 24	25 TO 44	45 TO 64	65 OR OLDER
53%	44%	55%	52%	46%

Usefulness of Information

For the buyers that attended an open house, most of them found them useful at 90%, while the remain 10% did not find them useful.



OPEN HOUSE STATISTICS II

Where Buyers Found the Home They Purchased

For more than a decade, more buyers have been discovering the home they purchased on the internet, taking away from other sources like real estate agents, yard sign/open houses, and friends/family. However, just because a home buyer discovered the home on the internet, doesn't mean they didn't attend an open house, it means they found the home online first instead of serendipitously discovering it.

	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18
Internet	32%	36%	37%	40%	42%	43%	43%	44%	51%	49%	50%
Real Estate Agent	41%	38%	36%	36%	34%	33%	33%	33%	34%	31%	28%
Yard Sign/ Open House Sign	15%	12%	11%	11%	10%	9%	9%	9%	8%	7%	7%
Friend, Relative, Neighbor	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	4%	6%	7%

How Buyers Found Their Agent

The overwhelming majority of home buyers found the home they purchased were referred by a friend, relative, or neighbor at 41% followed by used agent from previous home at 12%. Meeting an agent at an open houses and getting contact information from an open house sign account for 9% of how a buyer found their real estate agent.

	ALL BUYERS	FIRST-TIME BUYERS	REPEAT BUYERS
Referred by (or is) a friend, neighbor or relative	41%	51%	36%
Used agent previously to buy or sell a home	12%	3%	17%
Inquired about specific property viewed online	7%	7%	6%
Website (without a specific reference)	6%	8%	5%
Referred by another real estate agent/broker	5%	4%	6%
Visited an open house and met agent	5%	5%	5%
Saw contact information on For Sale/Open House sign	4%	3%	4%

STEP 1

HOW TO QUICKLY GET/BORROW A LISTING

The first step to hosting an open house is to get a listing. If you don't have a listing to practice your open house skills, don't worry we'll share some ways you can get one quickly.

1. Ask Your Co-worker

One of your co-workers could have a listing that they're struggling with and that you can borrow for an open house. You can help your co-worker get more exposure for the listing as well as practice and new leads for yourself.

2. Ask Your Broker

Your broker may have a new listing lead, know of a team member struggling with listing, or has a listing they don't want – you won't know until you ask.

3. Ask Other Agents

This strategy may take longer than the first two, there are many ways to get listing from another agent. You can simply reach out to a local agent via phone, text, or social media and ask them if you can borrow their listing or look for listings on your MLS that are too far for the agent to host an open house. Of course, you'd follow the same process as if you asked your coworker but you and the agent can work out a special deal.

Note: January 1st is the best and easiest date to acquire listings because many of them are fresh and/or expired.



STEP 2

CHOOSE A DATE/TIME TO HOST YOUR OPEN HOUSE

Choose a date and time when consumers have free time and are likely to view the listing. Every local market will be different have vary on an ideal date and time, but afternoon on the weekend have been the most successful. Why the weekend? Because people work and may not have enough spare time to attend. Why the afternoon? Many families have sporting events like Little League or AYSO on Saturdays, while Sunday also sporting events and church.

The Best Day to Host an Open House

1. Sunday Afternoon
2. Saturday Afternoon

The Best Time to Host an Open House

1. 1PM to 3PM
2. 2PM to 4PM

Tips for Scheduling an Open House

1. Check the weather forecast
2. Do not schedule around holidays or special events
3. Typical open houses last between 2 to 5 hours



STEP 3 PREPARE THE LISTING FOR MARKET

Many buyers will see your home online and in person, so you'll want to look the best that it can. There are four components to consider when you prepare your home for sale: **cleaning/decluttering, home improvements, staging, and curb appeal**. These should be decided on and completed before high-resolution listing photos are taken.

Decluttering Tips:

1. Ask Yourself...

- Do I like it? Do I need this?
- How long has it been since I used this?
- How will I store it if I decide to keep it?

2. Kitchen

- Throw away food past the expiration date.
- Get rid of unused products and appliances.

3. Living Room

- Donate books you've finished reading.
- Clear out old CD's, video tapes, and DVD's.
- Clear unnecessary items from surfaces.
- Put your sentimental valuables in a box and put it in storage.

4. Bedroom

- Use suitcases and other bins as storage.
- Group small items together like jewelry, etc.
- Donate clothes that you haven't worn in over a year or don't fit.

Home improvements can be as major as renovating a kitchen to switching out fluorescent light bulbs with LED's. The purpose of any home improvement is to boost your home's value and increasing your return on investment. Therefore, consult with your agent what their experience has been with major projects, how buyers in your market react to these changes, and if it's worth your investment.

Minor Home Improvement Ideas:

1. Clean/Repair

- Deep clean your carpet.
- Re-caulk bath.
- Re-grout tile.
- Leaky faucets and aerator build up on sinks.
- Patch up holes and cracks

2. Replace

- Doorknobs and doorbells.
- Smoke detectors and light bulbs.
- Broken outlet and light switch, and vent covers with screwless covers.
- Replace keyed deadbolts with keypad deadbolts.
- Toilet seats with soft close, warm, or bidet.
- Consider replacing major appliances (refrigerator, wash/dryer, etc.).

3. Add

- Battery powered motion light sensors to closets and in your garage.
- A garbage disposal.
- House plants.

STEP 3 PREPARE THE LISTING FOR MARKET

Staging is a good strategy for showing off a home but it's not for everyone - ask your real estate agent if staging is right for your market. According to a [2019 NAR report](#):

The Impact of Staging on Buyers

- 83% - Say it is easier to visualize property as future home.
- 38% - More willing to walk through home they saw online.
- 37% - Will positively impact home value if home decorated match buyer's taste.
- 23% - Overlook other property faults.
- 7% - Will negatively impact home value if home decorated doesn't match buyer's taste.
- 4% - Are more suspect of home features.

The Percentage Change in Dollar Value Offer of a Staged Home

- 0% - Staged home had a negative impact.
- 19% - No impact on dollar value.
- 22% - Staged home has increase of 1% to 5%.
- 17% - Staged home has increase of 6% to 10%.
- 5% - Staged home has increase of 11% to 15%.
- 2% - Stage home has increase of 16% to 20%.
- 33% - Not sure.

Impact of Time on Market

- 9% - Greatly increased time on market.
- 9% - Slightly increased time on market.
- 12% - Does not impact time on market.
- 28% - Slightly decrease time on market.
- 25% - Greatly decrease time on market.
- 18% - Don't know.

Staging Tips

Do's

- **Hang Mirrors** – Hang a mirror in your entry way for a more spacious look.
- **Remove Clutter** – Clutter makes your house look small and unwelcoming.
- **Reduce Furniture** – Minimize the amount of furniture to make your home look more open and spacious.
- **Use Neutral Colors** – Neutral colors show best in all homes and doesn't turn off buyers.
- **Use Technology** – Technology updates are a huge selling point, so showcase them.

Don'ts

- **Mask Odors** – Use only natural deodorizers and avoid floral scents.
- **Neglect Exterior** – Curb appeal is extremely important – make sure it's neat and attractive.
- **Overcrowd** – Keep your room's purpose clear and well defined.
- **Random Color** – Bright colors make open spaces feel much smaller
- **Heavy Drapes** – Use sheer curtains to bring in natural light.

STEP 4 MARKETING YOUR OPEN HOUSE

Use a holistic approach during your open house marketing campaign by leveraging online and offline marketing strategies. Use high-resolution photos and begin your marketing campaign 7 days before the event takes place.

Digital Marketing Strategies to Promote an Open House

- 1. Website** – Add the listing to your website and update its details to include the open house date/time.
- 2. Third-Party Websites** – Add the listing and open house date/time to websites like Zillow, Realtor.com, Craigslist, etc.
- 3. Email** – Create an open house announcement email and include a link to the listing, important details, and rules/guidelines. This is also a great opportunity to add value by sharing open house tips for home buyers.
 1. Create an additional reminder email and schedule it to send the day before or the day of the open house.
 2. Create a follow-up email that will be sent after the open house.
- 4. Social Media** – Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are primary social networks for connecting with consumers and sharing ideas. To help you promote your event, use Facebook's Event feature and Instagram's Countdown sticker. Facebook and Instagram prioritizes these posts, so they'll receive more reach and engagement than a standard post.
 - 1. Marketing an Open House on Facebook with Events**
 - An Event post displays detailed information about the open house like date, time, location, etc.
 - Facebook sends reminder notifications to people that RSVP'd.
 - An Event post organically reaches the friends of people who RSVP'd and may attend.
 - [Learn how to create a Facebook Event >>>](#)
 - 2. Marketing an Open House on Instagram Stories with the Countdown Sticker**
 - Makes your Instagram Stories interactive, different, and memorable.
 - Instagram let's you personalize the countdown's name, date, time, and theme.
 - When a viewer taps the reminder symbol, they'll be presented with the option to add a reminder to their calendar.
 - [Learn how to create an Instagram Story and add a Countdown Sticker >>>](#)
 - 3. Marketing an Open House on Twitter with Hashtags**
 - Include a picture in your post, the open house date/time, the address, and special features/amenities.
 - If you have space, use emojis and include hashtags for your local market and neighborhood, as well as #openhouse #realestate #home.

STEP 4

MARKETING YOUR OPEN HOUSE

In order to get the most out of your open house, you must implement offline marketing strategies to complement your digital marketing strategies.

Offline Marketing Strategies to Promote an Open House

- 1. Signage and Decorations** – Examine the façade, what can you add to make it stand out and promote your open house? Along with your yard post, include an open house sign with the date/time of the event and consider decorations, flags, and balloons.
- 2. Door Hangers and Flyers** – Create an open house flyer and print enough for your neighborhood – between 100 to 500 copies. Go around your neighborhood and knock on as many doors as you can 2 to 3 days before the open house event. Leave a flyer if the occupant isn't home or doesn't answer the door.
- 3. Newspapers** – Reach out to your local newspaper and purchase ad space in their newspaper for your open house.
- 4. In Person** – When you encounter someone, spark a conversation and get updates about their life. Ask them if they know anyone who is looking to or might be interested in moving into the area.



STEP 5

PREPARE THE OCCUPANTS FOR YOUR OPEN HOUSE

You and the homeowner should be on the same page before the open house. Follow these tips if the still homeowner currently occupies the home

1. Reach out to the homeowner and confirm the date/time of the open house.
2. Confirm they will be off the property during the open house.
3. Remind them to lock up valuable possessions in a safe or secure place.
4. Tell them to put family photos and other personal items that show their faces or names.
5. Confirm that the home is clean and ready to be shown on the inside and outside.
6. Get an idea of what makes the home special by asking the homeowners what they love about the home. Share that information with your open house attendees during your conversations.



STEP 6

PREPARE THE HOME FOR YOUR OPEN HOUSE

There is still plenty to set up and prepare for the day of the open house. You must set up the open house so its easy to find, do final touches on the exterior and interior and more.

6 Tasks to Complete the Day of Your Open House

1. Arrive at the home between 1 to 2 hours before your open house.
2. Prepare the home, turn on all the lights, open all the windows and doors, make sure everything is spotless, clean, and odorless.
3. Set up between 10 to 20 open house signs in an easy-to-follow trail that directs and guides main street traffic to your open house – add balloons to your signs to make them stand out more to pedestrians and cars that are passing by.
4. Set up your sign-in station and include a sign in sheet, flyers, business cards, local market reports, and other content that a home buyer may find useful.
5. Optional: Consider bringing refreshments for your guests like water, soda, or snacks. If you have a local restaurant owner in your network, purchase some of their appetizers and promote their dishes during your open house. These ideas cost extra but they can leave a significant impression on attendees – and it's a great conversation starter.



STEP 7

ENGAGE GUESTS DURING YOUR OPEN HOUSE

There is a process to follow when you greet guests during your open house. Be mindful and have a service-centric attitude but don't come off too salesy or desperate. Be genuine and energetic while you speak. Be conscious of your posture, body language, tone, and facial expressions. Excitement is contagious, so if you get genuinely excited, they will too.

1. Greet each guest with a warm introduction and a nice, firm handshake.
2. Make sure they sign in. Say your open house greeting script and make sure they sign in.
 - Ask service-oriented questions like their priority features, which neighborhoods, why they made those choices, and how their house hunting experience has been so far.
 - Try to get as much information from the guest as possible but without being intrusive. During your greeting, you should at least discover if they're browsing or if they're considering purchasing the home.
 - If a guest asks why they need to sign in, simply respond with, "For protection purposes, the seller has requested all attendees to sign in."
3. No matter what the guest says, let them know you're here to help and give them permission to look around the house.
4. After the guest has looked around and returned, ask them about their thoughts of the house and if they have questions.



STEP 7

ENGAGE GUESTS DURING YOUR OPEN HOUSE

Buyers Vs. Sellers During Your Open House

You will encounter both first-time buyers, who are looking to purchase and repeat buyers, who are homeowners looking to sell their current home and purchase a new one. Each of these groups needs to be treated differently.

For Home Buyers

1. The conversation can go two ways. Either they're looking for a house and they have an agent OR they don't have an agent.
2. If they don't have an agent, simply ask them if they want to purchase this house.
3. If they say decline, ask a few more questions to get a better understanding of why, their needs, and preferences.
4. Find a home on your mobile device that they might find interesting. Offer to give them a walkthrough after your current open house finishes.
 - If they say no, ask when they are available for a sit-down meeting, where you can build a relationship, share relevant content that's not with you, and go over their needs in depth.

For Home Sellers

5. Ask the guest about their current home – the features, how far they are along the selling process, if they're going to stage, if they're working with an agent, and similar topics - and desired moving date.
6. Offer a complimentary home valuation and/or any other services you can provide through your network like movers, cleaners, etc.



STEP 8

FOLLOW UP WITH OPEN HOUSE GUESTS

Your follow up is just as important as every other step that we've shared – you must do it to receive the full benefits of your open house. Once your scheduled open house ends...

1. Start inputting the contacts into your CRM and includes notes about your conversations to help you remember important details when you follow up. During this time, stragglers may come in
 1. If they do, give them the same experience as other guests and don't rush them and notify the homeowners of the extension.
2. After everyone is gone, go around the neighborhood and pick up your open house signs.
3. When you get home, review the email you wrote on step 4. Alternatively, you can write a hand-written letter thanking guests for stopping by and remind them to contact you when they have any questions about real estate.
4. For the guests that are seriously considering the home, add them to a drip email campaign and follow them on social media. This will help you keep top of mind and let's you stay updated on their life.



SOCIAL DISTANCING TIPS FOR HOSTING OPEN HOUSES

As businesses across the US reopen, you must focus on giving consumers peace of mind by abiding by health and safety concerns. Each state and each county has different rules, so you must research your county and confirm that you are following guidelines. Here are do's and don'ts for hosting an open house with health and safety guidelines:

Do's

1. Practice social distancing by staying at least six feet away from other guests.
2. Bring masks and gloves for you and each guest, hand sanitizer, and disinfectants to clean areas that a guest touches like a light switch or a doorknob, products.
3. Do not allow more than one group in the home at a time. Minimize touches to the home and guest. Once the group leaves, you must disinfect common areas of the home.
 - Be prepared, have tape on the driveway so guests can remain six feet apart just in case a line forms.
4. Consider showing the home by appointment only.
5. Consider alternative ways to show a home:
 - **Virtual Walkthrough** - A virtual walkthrough offers an interactive 3-D layout of a home and allows a user to explore it by pressing navigation buttons on their computer screen.
 - **Video Call Walkthrough** - A video call walkthrough is live and will be more conversational based than a virtual walkthrough. You are essentially giving a tour of the home through your phone, Zoom, or other device.
 - **Adapted-Conventional Walkthrough** - You and the lead both meet at the listing with masks, gloves, wipes, etc. Do a video call with and let the lead into the home while you stay outside. Guide them through the home and pitch each room to them as if you were standing next to them.
 - **Conventional Walkthrough** - The same as before social distancing but with the proper tools: masks, hand sanitizer, gloves, disinfectant wipes, etc.

Don'ts

1. Ignore health and safety guidelines
2. Violate social distancing rules

WANT TO GENERATE MORE REAL ESTATE LEADS?

TORCHx provides digital marketing tools to help real estate professionals attract home buyers and efficiently convert them into clients.

Attract Home Buyers – As a Google Premier Partner, we're experts in paid search lead generation and we'll drive traffic to your new, beautiful IDX website with landing pages for every county, city, and neighborhood in your MLS.

- SEO and mobile-responsive websites
- Custom website branding
- Expertly-managed PPC campaigns

Convert Leads Efficiently – Not every prospective home buyer is ready to become a client right away. We give you the tools to nurture them with minimal time spent.

- Drip campaigns
- Automated emails & text messaging
- Property blasts

Keep Leads Engaged – Your new automated CRM will ensure your leads never forgotten or fall through the cracks.

- Action-based communications
- Automated lead notifications
- Third-party lead import

Request a free demo of Torch X's digital marketing software for real estate professionals.

REQUEST A FREE DEMO TODAY



