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Brokerages drop the ball on most consumer phone, web inquiries

While some brokerages perform better than others, response rates to consumer phone and web inquiries are fairly abysmal industry-wide, a Pied Piper study found.

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Lead generation is a huge part of many real estate agents' business. But new data suggests that many agents are squandering leads through some of the most basic connection points.

According to a study recently conducted by Pied Piper, only about one-third of consumers on average were able to speak with someone when calling a real estate office with the goal of connecting with an agent — and 73% did not receive any follow-up via phone, text or email within 24 hours.

However, a handful of brokerages clearly outperformed others when it came to follow-up, with one family-owned company outranking the rest.

Getting an agent on the phone: For its 2026 Lead Handling Effectiveness study, the customer satisfaction measurement company said it submitted 2,198 consumer inquiries via phone and through local office websites across 21 large real estate brands in June and July. Initial and follow-up responses were scored based on speed and quality in the 24 hours following those initial consumer contacts to give brokerages Lead Handling Effectiveness scores ranging from 0 to 100.

Although 97% of calls connected to the brokerage office, just 53% of callers spoke with a representative in a timely manner, the study found, and only 33% were able to speak with an agent during their call.

Web leads that go nowhere: Customers who reached out through an office's website received even worse response rates, Pied Piper found. About 1 in 10 website inquiry forms did not function properly and 68% of web inquiries did not receive any response within 24 hours. Only 18% of web inquiries yielded communication from an agent and just 10% resulted in contact from an agent within an hour.

The average website inquiry's Lead Handling Effectiveness score industry-wide was 11 out of 100. For phone inquiries, the average score was 30, the report said.

How companies performed: Of the 21 major brands assessed for the report, Howard Hanna Real Estate Services received the best Lead Handling Effectiveness score at 30.

A handful of brokerages succeeded more than 60% of the time in getting a consumer connected — within 30 seconds of making their call — with someone who could help them, above the industry average of 53%. Those included Howard Hanna, Realty Executives, EXIT Realty, Sotheby's International Realty, Douglas Elliman and Realty One Group.

Meanwhile, Compass, United Real Estate and Keller Williams connected consumers with a representative within 30 seconds less than 40% of the time.

When it came to actually speaking with an agent, six firms — Howard Hanna, EXIT Realty, Douglas Elliman, Long & Foster, Realty Executives and Sotheby's — achieved this more than 40% of the time for consumers who called the firms, while four — Compass, ERA, Keller Williams and United Real Estate — did so less than 25% of the time.

REMAX, Realty One and Howard Hanna received the best response scores for online inquiries, with these firms responding within 24 hours over 60% of the time. Engel & Völkers, Realty Executives, Sotheby's and Long & Foster had the lowest response scores at less than 10%, far below the industry average of 32%.

Onus falls on the consumer: Ultimately, consumers who really want to get in touch with an agent have to put in the work themselves to make it happen, the study's findings suggest.

Consumers who did not reach an agent during an initial phone call were often given an agent's name and direct phone number, according to Pied Piper researchers. "The customer might call that agent, but could just as easily move on to the next office or agent on their list," the study said.

These findings indicate that brokerages and individual agents might miss out if they don't respond in a timely fashion. "Too often, our study found calls unanswered or follow-up delayed, giving customers time to connect with another agent before the first company realizes the opportunity was missed," Pied Piper Vice President of Metrics and Analytics Cameron O'Hagan said in a news release.

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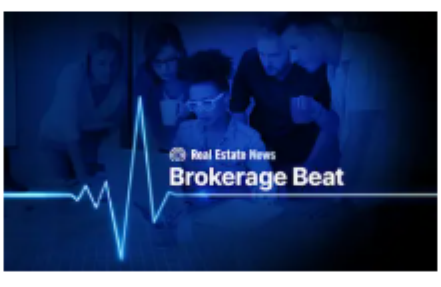

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