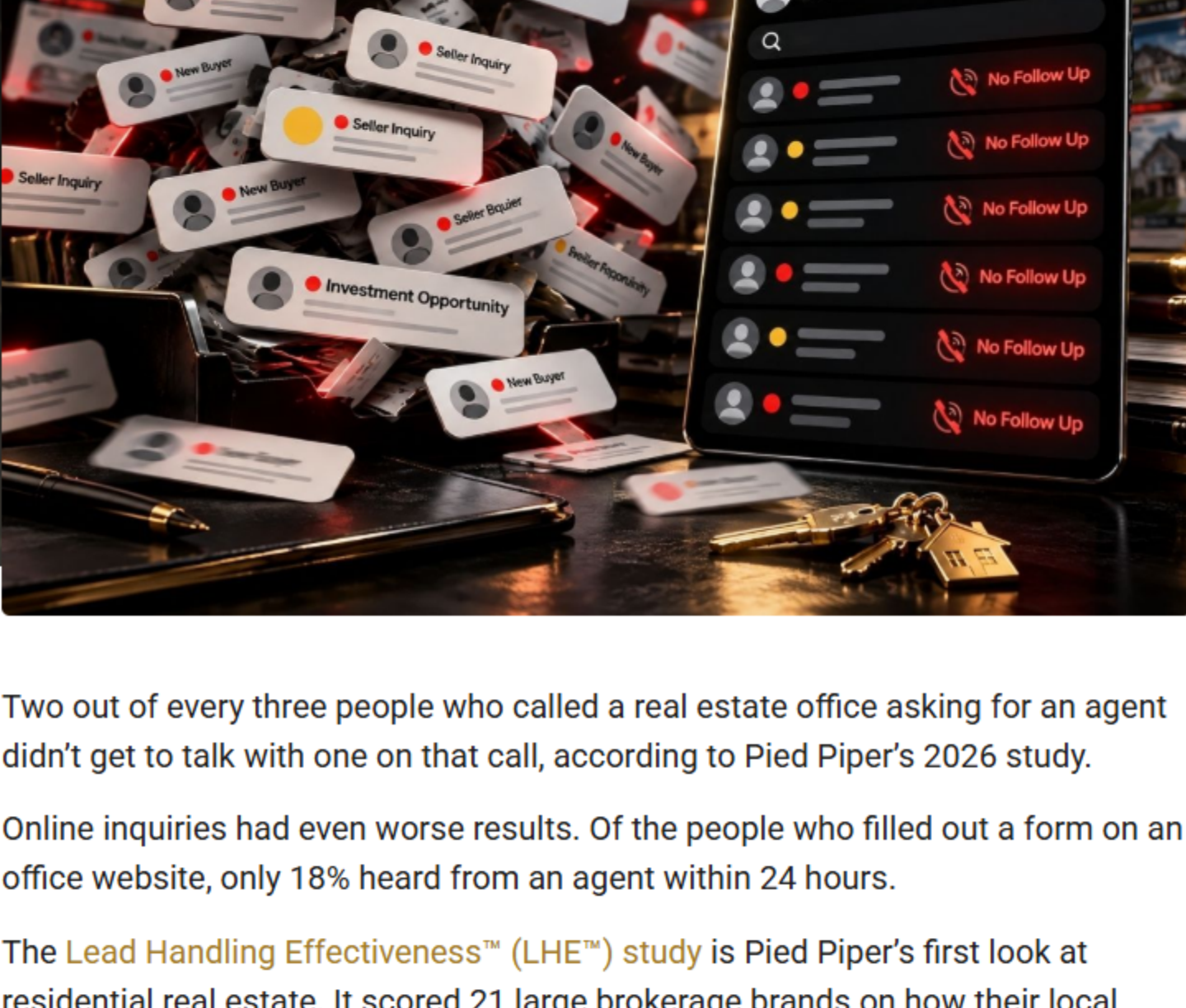


73% of Calls to Real Estate Offices Get Zero Follow-Up Within 24 Hours

Pied Piper's 2026 study found two out of three callers didn't reach a real estate agent, and 18% of website inquiries heard from one within 24 hours. fol

OCTOBER 12, 2026 |  SARAH LENTZ |  AGENT STRATEGY



Two out of every three people who called a real estate office asking for an agent didn't get to talk with one on that call, according to Pied Piper's 2026 study.

Online inquiries had even worse results. Of the people who filled out a form on an office website, only 18% heard from an agent within 24 hours.

The **Lead Handling Effectiveness™ (LHE™)** study is Pied Piper's first look at residential real estate. It scored 21 large brokerage brands on how their local offices handled someone asking to work with an agent, following each inquiry from the first contact through the next 24 hours.

Read on to see how they did.

What Happened When Customers Called an Office

Pied Piper tracked each call to see whether the caller ended up talking with an agent. Here's what callers ran into across the industry:

- 97% of calls connected
- 53% of callers reached someone who could take their inquiry within 30 seconds
- 33% of callers talked with an agent during the call

Speed varied from brand to brand. Here's how often callers reached someone who could help within 30 seconds:

- **More than 60% of the time** at Realty Executives, EXIT Realty, Sotheby's International Realty, Douglas Elliman, Howard Hanna and Realty ONE Group
- **Less than 40% of the time** at Compass, United Real Estate and Keller Williams Realty

Six brands connected callers with an agent more than 40% of the time:

- Howard Hanna, 57%
- EXIT Realty, 46%
- Douglas Elliman, 45%
- Long & Foster, 43%
- Realty Executives, 43%
- Sotheby's International Realty, 41%

Four brands connected callers with an agent less than 25% of the time:

- United Real Estate, 12%
- Keller Williams Realty, 14%
- ERA Real Estate, 17%
- Compass, 21%

When callers didn't reach an agent, office staff would often give them an agent's name and phone number. It was then up to the caller to reach out to that agent or move on to the next name on their list.

Follow-up didn't make up for the missed connections. Within 24 hours, 73% of phone inquiries got no follow-up of any kind.

The average phone inquiry earned an LHE™ score of 30 out of 100.

Buyers and sellers tend to contact more than one office or agent before they choose someone to work with. **Cameron O'Hagan**, Vice President of Metrics & Analytics at Pied Piper, explained what the study found when offices were slow to respond.

"New real estate clients often consider several options before choosing who to work with. 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."

Website Inquiries Fared Worse

People who reached out through an office website had a rougher experience from the start. Close to one in ten of the website forms Pied Piper used didn't work the way they should.

Here's what happened to website inquiries in the 24 hours after they were sent:

- 68% got no response of any kind
- 18% led to contact from an agent
- 10% heard from an agent within one hour

Some brands did much better than others at answering web forms. These brands responded to website inquiries more than 60% of the time:

- RE/MAX
- Realty ONE Group
- Howard Hanna

These brands responded less than 10% of the time:

- Engel & Völkers
- Realty Executives
- Sotheby's International Realty
- Long & Foster

These brands had the highest share of website inquiries that led to contact from an agent:

- Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, 39%
- Realty ONE Group, 29%
- RE/MAX, 27%

On the flipside, these brands had the lowest:

- Long & Foster, 1%
- ERA Real Estate, 3%
- Sotheby's International Realty, 3%
- Realty Executives, 4%
- Keller Williams Realty, 5%

Across the industry, the average website inquiry scored 11 out of 100 on the LHE™ scale. Phone inquiries averaged 30.

What Follow-Up Looked Like in the First 24 Hours

Pied Piper tracked whether offices came back to an inquiry after the first contact. It also counted how many different ways they tried to reach the customer.

Here's what follow-up looked like across the industry:

- Offices followed up within 24 hours 30% of the time
- Offices used two or more ways to follow up 9% of the time

These brands followed up within 24 hours more than 35% of the time:

- Howard Hanna, 50%
- Realty ONE Group, 46%
- RE/MAX, 39%
- Compass, 39%

These brands followed up less than 15% of the time:

- Realty Executives
- Sotheby's International Realty
- Long & Foster

RE/MAX led all brands in using more than one way to follow up:

- RE/MAX, 23%
- Howard Hanna, 16%
- Realty ONE Group, 16%
- Windermere Real Estate, 15%

Lastly, these brands used more than one follow-up method the least:

- Keller Williams Realty, 0%
- Sotheby's International Realty, 1%
- Engel & Völkers, 2%
- United Real Estate, 4%

How the 21 Brands Ranked

Before the rankings, here's a look at how Pied Piper set up the study:

- It submitted 2,198 inquiries by phone and through local office websites
- Every inquiry used the same standardized customer scenario, so each office got the same request
- More than 100 weighted measurements covered the first contact and everything after it
- Follow-up by phone, text and email was tracked for 24 hours
- Scores run from 0 to 100, and each brand's score is the average of its measured locations across phone and web inquiries

The industry average LHE™ score was 21 out of 100. These five brands ranked highest:

1. Howard Hanna, 30
2. Realty ONE Group, 27
3. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices, 26 (tie)
4. EXIT Realty, 26 (tie)
5. RE/MAX, 25

At the bottom of the ranking, these five brands had the lowest scores:

1. Keller Williams Realty, 12
2. United Real Estate, 15
3. Engel & Völkers, 16
4. Long & Foster, 17
5. HomeSmart, 17

Pied Piper also scored each brand's individual locations. A location scoring over 70 earned the label "Excellent Speed and Quality," and one scoring under 30 was labeled "Slow and/or Unhelpful."

Here's how locations scored across the industry:

- 2% of locations scored over 70
- 70% of locations scored under 30

Howard Hanna had the largest share of locations over 70, at 9%. It also had the smallest share under 30, at 57%. Keller Williams Realty had the largest share of locations under 30, at 87%, and United Real Estate came next at 84%.

The Play for Agents

The study found customers were left to reach an agent on their own in a lot of cases. According to Pied Piper, the most effective offices and agents make the connection themselves or follow up in a timely manner.

For you, the play is to make the connection before the customer moves on to the next name on their list. Because, chances are, they will.

Here are a few ways to use what the study found:

- Find out how your office handles calls for you when you're not available.
- Test the contact form on your office's website. Close to one in ten forms in the study didn't work the way they should.
- Follow up on every inquiry within 24 hours (sooner is better).
- Use more than one way to follow up, like a call along with a text or email.

When it comes to web form inquiries, get clear on who's responsible for fielding or responding to those. You could set up a response panel every agent has access to. Any agent on the team can claim a call and respond to it, and the whole team gets an alert if a call goes unanswered within 24 hours or less. You could even gamify it so agents who respond to the most calls would rank on a leaderboard with the number of calls they responded to and the average wait time.

However you do this, consumers remember which brokerages didn't bother responding or didn't call back within 24 hours.

Make it a priority to tie your brand to a quick and value-forward response.

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Sarah Lentz started writing for BAM in late May of 2022 and quickly realized she was exactly where she wanted to be (and still is). Before BAM, she worked as a freelance writer. She lives in Minnesota with her four kids and, in her free time, is writing her next book.

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