

By Caroline Heller

If you were on Instagram a decade ago, you might remember its original icon of a polaroid-type camera, one that stressed the platform's commitment to photos. However, the world is different now, and social video platforms, like TikTok, have changed things. Instagram is no longer a photographer's hub and has recently altered its algorithm to favor videos over static posts. This has left many creators having to adapt the way they're marketing themselves to their followers. If an agent hasn't utilized Instagram reels yet, now is the time.

Videos generate engagement

"Every marketing class I've ever taken talks about how video will generally get more engagement than a static post, regardless of the platform," says Michele Bailey, CRS, broker associate and one of the founding agents for Compass 30A in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. Bailey put this theory to the test when she began documenting the construction of her house through videos on Facebook.

Getting Real with Instagram Reels

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—Michele Bailey, CRS

“To make a long story short, my husband had been diagnosed with cancer at about the time we were supposed to start our house. Our budget didn't allow for a builder because my husband was supposed to build it—he'd been in construction for 30 years,” Bailey says. “It took us a long time to find a builder who was willing to work with us, and part of our agreement was that I would market the build on Facebook.”



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The videos worked. “It was really fun, and I was surprised by how much engagement they generated,” says Bailey. “I couldn’t go anywhere without someone asking me about how things were going with the house.”

Ensuring visibility and increasing your sphere

Now it’s even more crucial for agents to produce video content because static posts have less visibility, especially on Instagram. “Over the past four months, I’ve really seen the shift of Instagram favoring video-centric content,” says Amelia Garza, communications specialist at the Residential Real Estate Council (RRC). “It’s pushing video content; regular photo content is being lost in the feeds and isn’t appearing for people.”

This has forced even larger organizations like RRC to adjust their strategy. “We’ve really had to change up our approach. When it comes to sharing informative content or industry news, instead of making a carousel or several slides with graphics, we’ve now started making those into short-form videos or reels,” Garza says. “This way it’s appearing for our followers.”



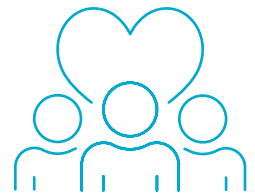
One thing to keep in mind with Instagram reels is that they can be helpful for any REALTOR® trying to expand their sphere. “When you post a reel, Instagram sends it out to all of Instagram, not just your followers,” says Garza. “Photos only go to your feed and your immediate followers.” Adding hashtags will only increase the chances of your videos getting seen by more people, allowing you to grow your following.

Be authentic

“I find I didn’t get a lot of engagement for just-listed/just-sold promotions on any platform,” Bailey says.

“Instead, I’ve found that the more personal you are, the more of yourself that you put out there, the more you’re going to engage someone. They become invested in you and your story.”

A few years ago, Bailey had a social network campaign of doing 50 things before she turned 50 years old. “I had a lot of engagement with my ‘50 before 50’ list. I shared the list and encouraged anyone who wanted to participate to message me,” Bailey says. It was very personal because every time she accomplished something on the list, she would post the number along with the person who helped make it happen.



For more tutorials and lessons on Instagram reels, visit about.instagram.com/features/reels.

She's spending 2023 planning her campaign for next year, which will be called "365 on 30A." Highway 30A is the scenic highway in her market in Northwest Florida. "It's kind of a social experiment from the point of view of someone who has lived here for 30 years to see what all I can do in 365 days," Bailey says. "It revolves around the idea that I have gotten to a place where I've forgotten all the things that make living here amazing, but I want to remember," Bailey says. "That's part of my story, too. After my husband died in December 2021, my perspective on life shifted. The campaign is a reminder about living every day to its fullest because time is precious and finite. We shouldn't put things off for a tomorrow that may never come."

Don't be afraid to fail

There are plenty of free resources online that can teach agents how to make reels or video content, but agents should know going in that it will be a process of trial and error. "Our Instagram account at RRC involved some trial and error, and through the failures we've nailed down what works best for us," Garza says.

Similarly, Bailey is also not afraid of failing. "If you're not failing somewhere, it's because you're not trying enough new things," Bailey says. "You've got to be willing to see what sticks." **TRS**



▶ **MARKET MOMENT**

Positive Market Forecast for 2024

The real estate market shift has hit some REALTORS® hard, but there was reason for optimism at the NAR NXT conference in Orlando, Florida, in November 2022. Lawrence Yun, NAR's chief economist, expects home prices to rise slightly and sales to dip in 2023, only to rebound the following year.

Yun predicted that home sales in 2022 would be down 15% year over year, then fall another 7% in 2023 before rising 10% in 2024. Home prices at the end of 2022 would be up 10% year over year, rise just 1% in 2023 and then jump 5% in 2024.

This equates to a "strong rebound" in 2024, according to Yun. "The prices will be mostly stable across the country [in 2023], meaning that half of the country will see minor price gains, and the other half will see minor price declines," Yun said. "Then in 2024, population, demography and the long-term path looks bright ... everything should be in a better situation." **TRS**

“The prices will be mostly stable across the country [in 2023].”

—Lawrence Yun

◀ Read more of Yun's market analysis at bit.ly/NAR-Market-Forecast.



National Forecast

Source: NAR

YEAR	UNIT SALE	HOME PRICE	DOLLAR VOLUME
2019	0.0%	+4.9%	+5%
2020	+5.6%	+9.1%	+15%
2021	+8.5%	+16.9%	+25%
2022 forecast	-15%	+10%	-5%
2023 forecast	-7%	+1%	-6%
2024 forecast	+10%	+5%	+15%