

Instant Gratification

New technologies open the door to ways to connect and farm clients

By Buck Wargo

Think you only have to be online to capture today's tech-savvy clients? Think again. While the Web has transformed the way real estate is bought and sold, other recent advances in technology are turning once-anonymous buyers and potential sellers into accessible leads. Read on to find out how the second generation of Web-based real estate technology can streamline and simplify your business.

Text Me @ ...

Text messaging has doubled in the past year, and REALTORS® are tapping into the instantaneous communications technology. By simply using the text-messaging function on their cell phones and sending a one-word code to a number listed on

a for-sale sign, within seconds, would-be buyers

can tap into the power of **House4Cell** (www.house4cell.com)

to receive a message with a description of the house.

Buyers can get information such as the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, price, and open house dates, and photos of a home's interior with a few quick taps on their keypads.

Operated by Phoenix-based Cellit Mobile Marketing, House4Cell captures the home buyer's phone number—even if it's blocked—and sends it to the agent who can follow up on the instant leads. "I think brochures on the for-sale sign are great, but you have no idea who took them," says Shella Reddington Curtis, the owner of Prudential Reddington, REALTORS®, in suburban Philadelphia who started the service earlier this year. "We know now who these potential buyers are and can follow up with them."

Reddington Curtis, who pays \$44.99 for listing 10 properties, says she believes the service will more than pay for itself over time. Not only has the service provided potential buyers she might otherwise have missed, House4Cell also has attracted sellers. "It's a great listing tool," Reddington



Heavy Traffic: The In Touch Realty Kiosk puts REALTORS® in high-profile locations.

Curtis says. "Anything I can do to set me apart from the pack is important. Nobody else is doing it around here, and when you sit down with sellers at the dining room table and show them how the listing works, they're impressed."

Reddington Curtis says her agency has averaged five to six text messages a month, but predicts the service will gain popularity as people become familiar with how to obtain real estate information from text messages. She notes, "A lot of people aren't even sure what it is, but text messaging is taking off, as you see with the vote for 'American Idol.' But instead of being used for reality television shows, you're going to see it used more in real estate."

Think ATM, Real-Estate Style

A portable new marketing tool for REALTORS® attempts to woo buyers shopping at the mall or grocery store or waiting at the airport. The size of an ATM, the **In Touch Realty Kiosk** (www.intouchrealtykiosk.com), which sells for \$4,990, is similar to the technology shoppers use to register wedding gifts. Users touch a selection on the menu to find and view photos of property listings, take a virtual tour, search the multiple listing service, and learn about a community. They can even arrange a

Open House: Never worry about an empty flyer box again with House4Cell's text messaging capability.