



<https://www.spousesflippinghouses.com>

Hosted by: Doug & Andrea Van Soest

## Episode 6 – 7 Marketing Strategies to Find Deals in Today’s Markets

**Doug:** Hello and welcome to episode six of the Spouses Flipping Houses podcast. Glad you're here with us. Glad to be back.

**Andrea:** Has it only been six? [*laughs*]

**Doug:** Well, it's actually been seven, because this is our second go around on this episode. What happened?

**Andrea:** Well, we are in a rush to get out of town, trying to record a couple of episodes before we leave, and so we poured our hearts and souls into this episode about marketing... [*laughs*]

**Doug:** [*chuckles*]

**Andrea:** ...and it did not record.

**Doug:** It's weird. I don't know, we're learning this whole technical thing with podcasting, and had our first hurdle if you will. Thought it

recorded, and sure enough, go back into the file, and it's blank. So, I don't know, hopefully this time the record works. So this is our second go around. So it should be polished and ready to go, right?

**Andrea:** Well... we'll see, we're kind of scattered, we're packing and getting stuff ready to go.

**Doug:** Where are we going?

**Andrea:** I can't tell you.

*[both laugh]*

**Andrea:** Doug is turning 40 this week and--

**Doug:** The big four-O.

**Andrea:** --me and our best friends are taking him on a surprise vacation. He doesn't know we're going.

**Doug:** No. It's kind of hard to pack when I don't know where I'm going.

**Andrea:** Do you really not know?

**Doug:** Especially with El Niño quickly approaching.

**Andrea:** *[chuckles]* Do you really not know?

**Doug:** I don't know. I have a guess.

**Andrea:** You have a guess. Hmm.

**Doug:** Yeah. And I'm not going to guess, because what if I'm wrong?

**Andrea:** And what if you're right? I have a terrible poker face, so, don't ask me.

**Doug:** And I like surprises, so I'd rather not know.

**Andrea:** Okay. Well then we'll tell you next time where we went.

**Doug:** So I'm excited for that. We leave tonight. Hopefully. [*chuckles*]  
So, today, what are we talking about?

**Andrea:** Today we are talking about marketing in real estate investing, and basically what that means and how you find deals.

**Doug:** Yeah, marketing... it's a huge part of any business, and especially real estate investing. If you don't have leads, then you really don't have a business. And the way to get leads is by some way of marketing. Advertising, generating leads in some fashion. Even if you're not spending money you can still be marketing for deals, or for leads, sorry.

**Andrea:** Yeah. I like what you said. If you are not marketing, you do not have a business.

**Doug:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Andrea:** Or you will not have a business.

[*both laugh*]

**Doug:** You will not have a business. You can't just wait for opportunities to fall from the sky right into your lap. Sometimes that

does happen, and that will happen occasionally, but if you want to do consistent deals, consistent business, you have to be able to market in some form or another to be able to predict what you're going to do, and know that you're going to have a business in the next month or too. So...

**Andrea:** We're going to tell you about seven ways to market for deals.

**Doug:** Yeah seven of what we consider the best strategies for marketing for deals in today's market, at least according to us.

**Andrea:** Yeah. So there's some that we're going to leave off the list actually, that used to be really great strategies, but they're not viable really today.

**Doug:** Right, yeah, and as timing changes, markets change, we'll probably get into that a little bit... strategies for marketing for those deals, for those leads can change as well. Just like anything else. But today, these seem to be what are the most popular. So you want to go ahead and do number one?

**Andrea:** Sure. So the first tactic that we use to market for real estate investing deals would be MLS. There's a lot of pros and cons to the MLS. It's free, first of all, assuming that you have access to it. But it is highly competitive, because it is available to just about anyone. So everyone sees what comes up the minute that it's listed, you are not the only person that sees it.

**Doug:** Now it gets fed out to [Zillow](#), to [Redfin](#), to [Trulia](#), to all these free websites that-- not just agents have the MLS anymore. Everybody has access to the listings on the MLS on their phone.

**Andrea:** So yeah, you have to have good systems in place to be able to search for these deals, to see them immediately when they pop up, to be able to recognize that it is in fact a deal, get your offer in right away, be able to write your offer that's going to be clean, that's going to be competitive with other people...

**Doug:** If you're trying to buy homes on the MLS today, and you're going about it in a nonchalant way, it's going to be really difficult. If you're just pulling up the listing for ten minutes a day, and making a call, and maybe making an offer, good luck. It's going to be a really tough road. You can do it... deals are there. But you've got to have good systems, and a good strategy.

**Andrea:** One thing I would suggest is if this is the method that you choose, is that you make some relationships with agents.

**Doug:** Absolutely.

**Andrea:** Because a lot of times they know that you're an investor, they might bring a deal to you first before they've even put it on the MLS, trying to help the buyer-- I'm sorry, to help the seller to sell it more quickly.

**Doug:** Yeah. Yeah, if you've proven yourself as someone who can close on a house that seller needs to close, that agent's going to remember that, they're going to call you, and they're going to know that they've got a transaction that will close. Because a lot of these things fall out, let's face it.

We sell properties all the time on the MLS, so we know, for one reason or another, the buyer may change their mind, the financing doesn't come through... they fall out.

**Andrea:** Right, there's a risk to them in choosing just some random Joe Schmo that they don't know who submits an offer, as opposed to going with an investor that has proven themselves time and again to that agent. They know they're going to close, they know they're going to do what they say they're going to do. So go get in with some agents and be their go-to person.

**Doug:** Yeah. And another benefit just from making offers on the MLS and working it on a consistent basis is that you will build those relationships with agents, because you're going to come across some of the same agents over and over again, and they're going to start to get to know your name and your company. Which is another reason not to make silly offers as well, because you don't want to get a bad reputation out there either.

**Andrea:** And there will be people who think your offer is silly, no matter--

**Doug:** Yeah, that is true.

**Andrea:** --what it is. Yeah. But if you have a relationship with them and they understand your numbers, and you can explain that...

**Doug:** Right. Yeah, if you can help them to understand why you're making that offer, and how that makes sense for you, that's important as well. Because you don't want them to just discount your offer the next time it comes over.

**Andrea:** Right. Exactly.

**Doug:** All right, so strategy number two, tactic number two, would be direct mail. Now this is one of our favorites, it happens to be one of the ones that we get a lot of our leads and a lot of our deals from

currently. And we've been doing this for about the past four years or so, and it's become more and more popular as this market has changed and improved over the past several years.

And by direct mail, this means we're mailing directly to homeowners. We're not going on the MLS, we're not going through other means of auctions or anything like that, but actually trying to contact homeowners directly, and see if they're interested in selling their house. So there's lots of different niches within direct mail, and different types of people to mail to, types of lists out there. I'm going to go ahead and name some of them.

Some of the popular ones would be like an absentee owner list, and by absentee owner we're talking about somebody whose tax mailing address is different from the property address. And that person is likely a landlord, or somebody who owns a rental property or a second home, or a home they inherited, or something. They don't live there.

Those people might potentially be interested in selling to you at some point for whatever reason. Maybe they've had troubles with tenants or the property's just too far away for them to maintain.

Things like that. So absentee owner, and you can get those lists from your title companies, or from List Source, [ListSource.com](https://www.ListSource.com) is one provider of lists. Another provider would be, if you're on the West Coast, on the West Coast states, [PropertyRadar.com](https://www.PropertyRadar.com) - Sean O'Toole's website. Fantastic resource for investors.

**Andrea:** Not just for lists. For so many other things as well.

**Doug:** Right, in fact I don't think lists is even his primary reason for that website, there's all kinds of data on foreclosures, notices of

default, sales data, trends, all kinds of information in his website on real estate. But you can get lists, and they're actually cheaper than going through List Source or some of these other providers if you know what to do, so [PropertyRadar.com](https://www.propertyradar.com), definitely check that out. I think it's 59 bucks a month, it's really affordable. US Lead List is a provider of inherited properties, that's another good list.

So if people inherit a property, they may or may not want that property. They may or may not have an emotional attachment to the property, because maybe it was somebody in their family member had some rentals and that got passed onto them, and they don't know what to do with it other than sell it for the money that's involved there.

So those people could be potential motivated sellers, that's a good list to get. I don't think I know they limit their number of people they'll sell that list to just for competition, but check them out, [USLeadList.com](https://www.usleadlist.com).

Other lists that people mail to would be expired listings, off the MLS again. These are listings that didn't sell on the market and expired. So you know that the people wanted to sell at one time or another, maybe their price was too high, maybe something else has changed, but you know that they did raise their hand at one point saying, "yeah, I'm interested in selling."

But it didn't happen on the MLS, so you can mail to them, and maybe they'll become more realistic on their price, or maybe they'll be interested in calling you up and selling to you. So that's another popular list to mail to.

**Andrea:** For people who may not be really familiar with direct mail, do we want to give them a couple of sources for sending out mailers?

**Doug:** Oh for sure. You mean as far as the printing services and stuff?

**Andrea:** Yeah.

**Doug:** So you can obviously do this yourself, which we did in the beginning, we actually would print up our own letters -- if you have smaller lists that you're mailing to and you have time and you want to save some money, you can do that...

**Andrea:** We would sit in front of the TV at night, folding letters and stuffing envelopes.

**Doug:** [*chuckles*] Yeah, we would...

**Andrea:** And getting paper cuts.

[*both laugh*]

**Doug:** Getting paper cuts... and yeah, that's not fun.

**Andrea:** We even hired our kids to fold some letters.

**Doug:** [*chuckles*] Hey, and you know what, that's a good way to go. Put your kids to work, get them involved in the business, getting their feet wet... but no, you can definitely do that if you want to save money, but if you're going to do this on a mass scale, it's just not practical to do it yourself.

So you can buy a bunch of printers and have your own in-house printing company if you want to go that route, but we didn't go that route. So there's a couple different sources. If you're going to do postcards, one of the popular ones out there is called [click2mail.com](https://www.click2mail.com).

That's "click", the number two, mail.com. And they're pretty easy to use, and have reasonable prices for postcards. If you're going to do letters, I highly recommend my buddy in San Diego, Todd.

He's got a company called [YellowLetterHQ.com](https://www.YellowLetterHQ.com). And if you don't know what a yellow letter is, that's a whole other topic, but basically what that is is a handwritten letter on -- typically it's on yellow padded paper. It doesn't have to be yellow, it doesn't have to be handwritten, but--

**Andrea:** There's all kinds of strategy to these different mail pieces. And there's a lot of psychology behind the fact that people are more likely to open a letter that looks like a handwritten note from somebody, even if it's printed, they're going to be curious enough to go ahead and open it.

**Doug:** Yeah.

**Andrea:** And so one thing I would say about direct mail is that there are so many ways to go about doing it. There are so many different types of wording that you could put on a postcard or a letter, and there is tons of merit to these different methods and wording, and what color ink do you use and all that kind of thing, but don't get so hung up on that, just send out something.

Send out some postcards, send out some letters, learn as you go, figure out what works for you and what doesn't, don't get so hung up on that wording right from the get go.

**Doug:** So true. So true, very good point. Yeah. So yeah, Yellow Letter HQ, check him out for great prices for if you want to do yellow letters on a mass scale. Want to go to the next one?

**Andrea:** Sure, so the next one is bandit signs. You've probably seen these driving around your town. Basically it's like a poster nailed to a telephone pole.

**Doug:** [*chuckles*] Yeah.

**Andrea:** That says "we buy houses", or--

**Doug:** It's these little corrugated signs that you see everywhere with a stake in the ground.

**Andrea:** Yeah, with a little quick, something that grabs a person's attention about how they can sell their house fast and a phone number, is usually all that it is.

And so we actually don't do this right now, we've tried it at different times, and it's just not something that we want to spend the time doing, but I still think that it is a good strategy. I'm seeing a lot of them around our town right now, so I do think they work.

**Doug:** I think they work too. And again, it's about-- when we did them, we did it ourselves, so we would load up signs in the trunk and we would drive around Friday afternoon and put them around, and go collect them on Sunday evening.

And the reason for that is that most cities and municipalities don't like them in their neighborhood, obviously, they don't like a bunch of signs making trash everywhere, so that's why they're called "bandit signs", because they're typically not -- typically allowed, if you will. [*chuckles*]

So try to put them up on Friday, take them down on Sunday, so you're not just littering the neighborhoods. But yeah, they work, I think they work really well, you'll get calls. Obviously it depends on the area, it depends on who you're going after.

**Andrea:** Sometimes you'll even get calls from wholesalers that see your number, and that's a good contact to make as well.

**Doug:** Yeah, so definitely, bandit signs, a good way to go. Any resources there for printing, or? I think you can go to-- what is it? [Dirtcheapsigns.com](http://Dirtcheapsigns.com)?

**Andrea:** Dirt Cheap Signs, yeah.

**Doug:** That's one of them. There's a bunch out there.

**Andrea:** Really you can make your own, they have blank ones at Home Depot if you don't want to spend a lot of money.

**Doug:** True. And you can cut them in half and have two for the price of one if you want to make a little smaller sign. But everybody knows what we're talking about there, you've seen those signs everywhere.

**Andrea:** Yep, okay, so the next strategy would be internet marketing. And this one is becoming more and more important I think in the way that we live today.

**Doug:** Yeah.

**Andrea:** Everbody's got a Facebook, everybody's... when you want to search something online, you don't say, "oh, go search it online," you say, "Google it." So that's such a huge and powerful part of our world today, that I think it's really important that real estate investors or any business in general that wants to market, you need to have an internet presence.

**Doug:** Yeah, ten years ago, instead of the internet this might have been Yellow Pages. [*laughs*] As a... not that that doesn't work today, but internet is definitely... if you're not in the internet, if you're not on the web, you need to be because it's just gaining more and more momentum.

**Andrea:** So there's different types of internet marketing that you can do. The first one would be pay-per-click. So you are paying let's say [Google](#) or [Facebook](#), you're paying them to put your advertisement in front of peoples' eyes, and if a person clicks on your ad, then you pay a dollar, or two dollars, depending on the topic.

**Doug:** \$100.

**Andrea:** Yeah, it really could be that much. Depending on your topic and how hot it is... in your area.

**Doug:** Your keywords...

**Andrea:** Yeah. So there's a lot more to that, but the two main ones I would say are Google and Facebook. Both of them are probably a good place to start with pay-per-click. I would suggest spending your money on Google.

Facebook is a great way to get your business known. But Facebook tracks peoples' "likes". And Google tracks peoples' wants and needs. And their likes, but if you're on Facebook, you can like all the different real estate pages, and investing pages...

**Doug:** Mortgage pages, or whatever, yeah.

**Andrea:** Right, so they might target your ad to those kind of people who might like that topic, but it doesn't mean they need to sell a house. Whereas if you're putting out a pay-per-click ad on Google, they know who's going to Google to search "sell my house fast" or "sell my Riverside house fast", or "how do I sell my house that's causing me problems?"

**Doug:** Yeah.

**Andrea:** People put those very specific wording into Google, and Google knows everything.

*[both chuckle]*

**Doug:** If you're typing that in Google, the chances are that you really do have a need to sell your house. That's a good indicator. That's why Google pay-per-click is so valuable, because that is so specific.

**Andrea:** Totally.

**Doug:** Another form of internet marketing would be, if you don't want to go the paid route, where you're paying per click for ads, you can just do what's called SEO on your website, for those of you who aren't techie, that is search engine optimization.

Meaning you just have a website, you just have a landing page, the intent is to-- for somebody who is interested in selling their house to find you on the web and put in their information, and you can contact them. And you can try to get your page to rank organically, meaning, without paying, by doing a lot of different things.

Now this is a very expert oriented field. You can spend a lot of money here, doing this, or if you happen to know how to organically rank a website on your own, great, by all means do it, but there's a lot that is involved in that.

So just Google "SEO", but it involves putting out good content, links, articles, that are keyword specific for what people would be searching for, which is like, "sell my house fast," "we buy houses", those kind of things.

But long-term this can be a great strategy, along with pay-per-click, because you're building a website that's going to have presence, it's going to have-- over time it will gain rankings if you will, and hopefully show up when people are searching for that kind of thing. And when they go to your website, it's free. It doesn't cost you anything.

**Andrea:** The thing that I love about internet marketing is that you are putting yourself out there for people who need you. So they are calling you because they have a problem that they need solved, and they're

happy to call you, and you're happy to talk to them, whereas, with direct mail, which is a very good marketing strategy and I'm not saying don't do it, but you're going to get a lot of angry calls, people who are just so mad that you sent them a postcard.

**Doug:** Yes.

**Andrea:** Someday we're going to play some of our angry calls, because we've just gotten to the point now where we just laugh at it, and it's become pretty comical.

**Doug:** [*simultaneously*] It's entertaining, yeah.

**Andrea:** With internet marketing, that's the thing I love about it, is it just is happier. [*laughs*]

**Doug:** Yeah, it is happier. People want to talk to you. They're going there to talk to you, and those are incredible leads. Internet leads are really good, we've discovered. So definitely pay attention to internet marketing in some form or another.

Another place on the internet you can go to, you can go to [Craigslist](#), or other for sale by owner sites, that are basically just like classifieds, but you're looking for people who are posting houses for sale.

Just like any of these strategies, it's going to take some work to filter through, and go through and call them, and do research, but primarily what you're looking for is those keywords, those "handyman special," "fixer", "investor property", "needs work", "must sell fast", those types of words in their descriptions of the houses, are the people you want to focus on.

And you're also trying to look for off-market properties here, not homes that agents are posting on Craigslist, but homes that actual homeowners are posting on Craigslist. Can be a great resource, and it is free other than your time to go through and do all that. Craigslist and all these other for sale by owner sites are free. So check that one out as well.

So the fifth strategy for marketing would be bird dogs. Bird dogs is kind of a real estate term for anybody and everybody who brings deals to you. [*chuckles*]

So, if you've got a bunch of bird dogs out there, and if you think of the hunting reference here, they're out hunting for you, they're out hunting for leads and deals for some kind of a fee or a commission or, however they're compensated. So bird dogs can come in a lot of different forms.

They can be actual wholesalers, like wholesalers who are out there and you're on their buyer's list, and they're sending you deals when they get them, they can be agents, realtors, who are out there looking for fixer type properties that you've specified to them that you're looking for, and they're calling you for those leads.

And then you can think outside the box - this could be anybody. Anybody who is out and about in the streets all day long, or is working with people a lot, or is looking at houses all day long, like a mailman.

You can work out a deal-- I heard on a podcast a guy was interviewed and he was a mailman, and those guys see the run-down properties on their route, and they--

**Andrea:** They know who's not picking up their mail.

**Doug:** They know who's not-- exactly, they know who's not picking up their mail. They see the delinquent bills that come in the mail, I'm sure there's some privacy laws there that you'll have to deal with, but that's just one example. UPS guy, he's all over the streets all the time.

And if you work out something with these guys, like, "hey, let me know about these houses when you find them, we'll do some kind of a fee split, or I'll pay you if we buy the house," or something.

Whatever it is that works for him and for you, or for her and for you, then do it. You can have all kinds of bird dogs out there looking for you, for deals. Definitely a good strategy, and again, free, other than taking the time to get all those people looking for houses for you.

**Andrea:** So the next one is something that we call "driving for dollars". And pretty much, there's different ways that you can do it. It can be as simple as just being conscious as you're driving around, of properties that might be in distress, and jotting down the address.

Or it can be more specific, and you go out and you drive around a specific neighborhood, every street, looking for houses that look like the grass may be overgrown, somebody's not taking care of it, it's getting a little bit run down, and there might be a reason behind that.

So you might want to send that person a letter, or if you're really outgoing, you might want to go knock on their door and find out what's the situation and if they're interested in selling their house.

**Doug:** Yeah, absolutely. [Driving for dollars](#). And again, you don't have to do this yourself. You could hire somebody to do this. Train them on what to do, what you're looking for... there's actually apps out there that are really helpful in this regard as well.

I think Tucker Mary who put out an app recently, a driving for dollars app, that's specific for people who are trying to create their own in-house list to contact to mail to from the driving for dollars.

Great, great strategy. And the reason is, nobody else has that list. Only you would have that list of houses that you know the properties are just run down. They look like they're vacant, or need work.

**Andrea:** Right, maybe that property hasn't hit a specific list yet, maybe it's going to be on the foreclosure list or the delinquent list, but it's not there yet, and you know ahead of time before everybody else.

**Doug:** Yeah, and you're contacting them before everybody else. Good. So great strategy. And the seventh and final strategy that we're going to talk about today is networking. So networking is basically just telling people you know what you do. So in everyday life, just kind of make note.

Obviously don't be obnoxious about it [*laughs*], but yeah, just so that you're making people aware that, "hey, I buy houses, if you ever come across anybody with a house they're ready to get rid of, or having problems with the property, let me know, because that's what we do, we solve problems for people with problem properties."

That's a way to say it. If you go to local investment clubs, like RIAs that are around, great place to network and just let people know that you are a buyer looking for properties.

Because there's guaranteed there's wholesalers there, looking to sell properties. So you've just got to find them. The more you network, the more you can build relationships with people, agents, bird dogs, all of these things, that just kind of steamrolls on itself and expands, and eventually you'll have people calling you who you don't even know,

somebody referred you as a buyer, and you'll get leads and you'll get deals that way.

So don't take networking lightly, because it is a great strategy. And again, free. Doesn't cost anything, can be a great, long-lasting source of deals.

**Andrea:** Yeah, a great example of this is a woman in our office building came to us, just because she knows what we do, because our sign's on the door--

**Doug:** That's right.

**Andrea:** --and she's going to sell us a house.

**Doug:** That's right.

**Andrea:** I think she inherited-- do you know the--?

**Doug:** Yeah, she inherited a property, and just because she works near us--

**Andrea:** It's in bad shape, yeah, she doesn't know what to do with it...

**Doug:** She doesn't know what to do, she doesn't want to fix it, and so likely we're going to buy that house. So that's a great example. So that was marketing.

Again, to recap: the first one was MLS, the second strategy was direct mail, third was bandit signs, fourth was internet marketing, fifth was bird dogs, sixth was driving for dollars, and the seventh was networking.

**Andrea:** Cool. I don't know if it was as good the second time around as it was the first time...

*[both laugh]*

**Doug:** I don't know. But, nobody else will ever know, so...

**Andrea:** I will.

*[both laugh]*

**Doug:** Well that's it, we wanted to again encourage you to if you haven't already subscribed, please head over to iTunes, and [subscribe to the podcast](#), we hope you like what you're hearing, and leave us a rating and review, that really helps us as well. Also, we have a Facebook page.

**Andrea:** We have a Facebook page, yes--

**Doug:** We do.

**Andrea:** --you can like it, and then new episodes will pop up in your Facebook feed, so you can know about all that stuff, you can also go to our website, spousesflippinghouses.com, enter your e-mail in there if you want to be notified of future episodes, and we also have two free gifts for you. So check those out.

**Doug:** Check them out. All right, hopefully the recording worked, and we're going to end this and wrap it up, and we will talk to you next week.

**Andrea:** And if it didn't... well...

*[both laugh]*

**Doug:** I don't think we're going to do it a third time.

**Andrea:** We're not doing it again.

*[both laugh]*