

May 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:47 am.

That was so much fun. As I place the phone back on its cradle I notice that my hands are twitching ever so slightly with excitement. I glance at my watch – 9:47. An hour and 17 minutes. I had no idea he would have so many questions – and good questions to boot. I scribble down some notes on a feature suggestion for HOT™ that actually came out of the conversation with INMAN reporter Glenn Roberts Jr.

Flash forward almost a week. It is Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:30pm and INMAN just ran the article on HOT™ – HomesOpenToday.com. Of course, they got the url wrong in the teaser for the story. A quick email to Mr. Roberts and that is corrected in less than 10 minutes.

A quick glance at HOT™ tells me that we are suffering from the weekly ‘ebb and flow’ of published listings. There are only 35 published HOT™ listings. That certainly doesn’t represent the system well. A moment of panic, and then the decision to send a quick broadcast email to membership to let them know of this great marketing opportunity – ‘INMAN just sent a months worth of traffic to our site, please publish!’ 30 minutes later and that message is in the field, and members are heeding the call to action.

Now for the really fun part, the metrics. After a week I still haven’t fully digested the wealth of information that this windfall provided.

What is clear, however, is that the members who publish to HOT™ **early** receive a disproportional benefit from the system. Simple math would say that if the listing is published three times as long it should receive three times as much traffic. **Not so, say the metrics.** Lets take a hard example from the web statistics from HOT™. Listing A is published on Monday, and listing X is published on Friday, both for open homes on Sunday. Simple math says that by Sunday, listing A will have 3 times as much traffic, three times as much exposure. In reality, listing A has **14 times the exposure**. This pattern seems to hold well throughout the system for a variety of reasons. The progression in exposure is not mathematical, it is exponential.

Why is this? What are the implications for HOT™ users?

First, understand that HOT™ is a ‘first come, first served’ application. All other factors being equal, published listings will be displayed in the order they are entered. Publishing early gets you that preferred positioning near the top. Website visitors do not necessarily stay long enough to click through every listing, which of course means that they will view the initial results more often than results on later pages. This is very similar to understanding the dynamics of search engine use – the science of which is called Search Engine Optimization (want to learn more? Take our new class!). For HOT™, good SEO implies that you put your information in the system as early as possible.

Second, understand what you can do to take advantage of this; **publish early**. Certainly plans change from time to time, which is why it is so beneficial to have 24x7 access to a tool like HOT™. Members can make plans as far in advance as possible, and publish those plans. HOT™ allows you to publish 4 weekend days in advance. If your listing goes pending, HOT™ will clean up after you and remove your future open homes. In the unfortunate circumstance that you have to modify or remove a published open home, HOT™ is available 24x7. Consumers are encouraged to come back and confirm the details of open homes that they previewed in advance.

So, publish early, publish often, and let the increased exposure do the rest. Hopefully the next surge in traffic will find *your* HOT™ entry already waiting in the system!