

Top-Tier Marketing Plan for Luxury Homes



Laura Duggan

The following marketing plan was designed to help you present a well-conceived plan to the seller and then to help you generate maximum revenue from your listings. You may want to make a visual slide for each of these elements for either a presentation portfolio or an electronic presentation. In either case, deliver your presentation to the seller, then take the material with you when you leave.

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LAURA DUGGAN

Single Property Website

You are going to create a website for each individual listing you take. Go to www.agencylogic.com/duggan and you will see the **special pricing** we have negotiated depending on how many sites you purchase at one time. The cost is minimal (less than \$50) and the return is huge. Every listing I take deserves its own website, but this is especially true in the luxury arena. In the property website, you're going to display any piece of information that a buyer would want or need before taking the next step in their buying decision.

To make it easy, build an **electronic folder** on your computer to gather **the photos and documents**. The items you will put in the folder should include: professional photos for the slide show (be sure to label each photo), floor plan, survey, seller disclosure, MUD disclosure, agency disclosure, Home Owner Association documents, upgrade list, resale certificate, utility records, deed restrictions, plat map, room dimensions, building materials and specifications list, neighborhood newsletter, title commitment, builder information, historical notes, articles and publicity, unique features and architectural details, insurance binder, elevation certificate, tax certificate, financing information, estimated closing costs and a purchase contract (completed the way you would like to receive it—leave only the buyer name, the sales price and the closing date blank). Note: You won't have all of the above information, but the more you can display, the more interest it will generate with buyers. And, you will sell some of the listings yourself because the buyer won't need an agent to make an offer since you've provided all of the information plus a purchase contract. Be sure to write in the contract "XYZ Realty represents the seller and the seller only" if you include the purchase contract in the property website.

You are also going to include **links** to all of the information that a buyer would want to find online. Make a list of these links and place them in your electronic folder. By gathering this data ahead of time, it will be easy to build your property website. These links should include: a link to the neighborhood website, a link to each of the public and private schools nearby, country clubs, area golf, daycare, walkscore, senior care, weather, shopping, area lakes, entertainment, etc.

Once you've gathered your documents and links and they're in the electronic file on your computer labeled with the property address, you can start building your website. Go to www.AgencyLogic.com/duggan and create your account. You won't be charged until you decide to purchase the site. For your first property website, choose a listing that you currently have or borrow a listing from an agent in your office. The key is to use one where you can get the photos and documents. You probably already have those on a current listing. Make sure photos are professionally shot.

The directions for building the site are easy and very clear. If you can add photos into your MLS, you can build a property website. It takes about an hour and a half the first time you build one. (Alternatively, you could put your electronic folder in a file sharing program, like the Dropbox and have a virtual assistant or staff person do it for you.)

The menu headings on the side bar are changeable. I personally like one that says **Contracts and Disclosures** rather than Property Documents where I can load my pdf documents (like disclosures and contracts). You can also “bank” your links from your first site so that you don’t have to look them up again for subsequent sites.

The sellers love having a website just for their home. In **my listing presentation**, I explain that “**the purpose of the site** is to give the buyer all of the information that they need to take the next step in their buying decision without having to track down a real estate agent or wait for a return phone call that may cause them to lose interest and therefore enthusiasm and momentum.”

The address of the property is typically the **web address of the property website**. The Agency Logic system buys the URL as part of your purchase (no extra charge, so don’t buy the URL before you build the website) For example, I built a website for one of my listings on Selma Hughes Park Road. The web address I assigned to it was www.1201SelmaHughesParkRoad.com Take a look at the website so you can see how I built it. I use the property address (with the seller’s written permission) so that it is easy to remember and searchable if someone types in the address. For some luxury listings, the seller will want to keep the property address private and you will have to “name” your listing and create a unique web address. For example, you may want to create www.GildedEstateLakeAustin.com for this one and keep address private.

I **do not** put the property website address on any exterior marketing. It is not on the sign nor on the brochure if I put a brochure box in front of the property. This is very important! You want prospective buyers to call you so that you can speak with them personally. When I get a sign call (and I’ll share that strategy with you in another section), I talk with the sign caller about the property and how it might meet their needs. Then I say, “I’ve built a website specifically for this property. It has all of the gorgeous photography, floor plan, links to the schools and even the contracts and disclosures in case you would like to make an offer. May I text that web address to you?” Then I text the URL, in this case, www.1201SelmaHughesParkRoad.com to the caller.

I put **ONLY** the property website address (**never the price**) on the inside brochure and anything that I am personally handing out. (Mini-brochures, Just Listed mailing to neighbors, etc.) I also put it in the place of a virtual tour in the MLS. If you do a press release or have a story done on the property in your local newspaper, you will want to include the website address.

1201 Selma Hughes Park

Austin, TX 78732

For Sale \$6,900,000

» PHOTO TOUR » FULL DETAILS » PRINT BROCHURE

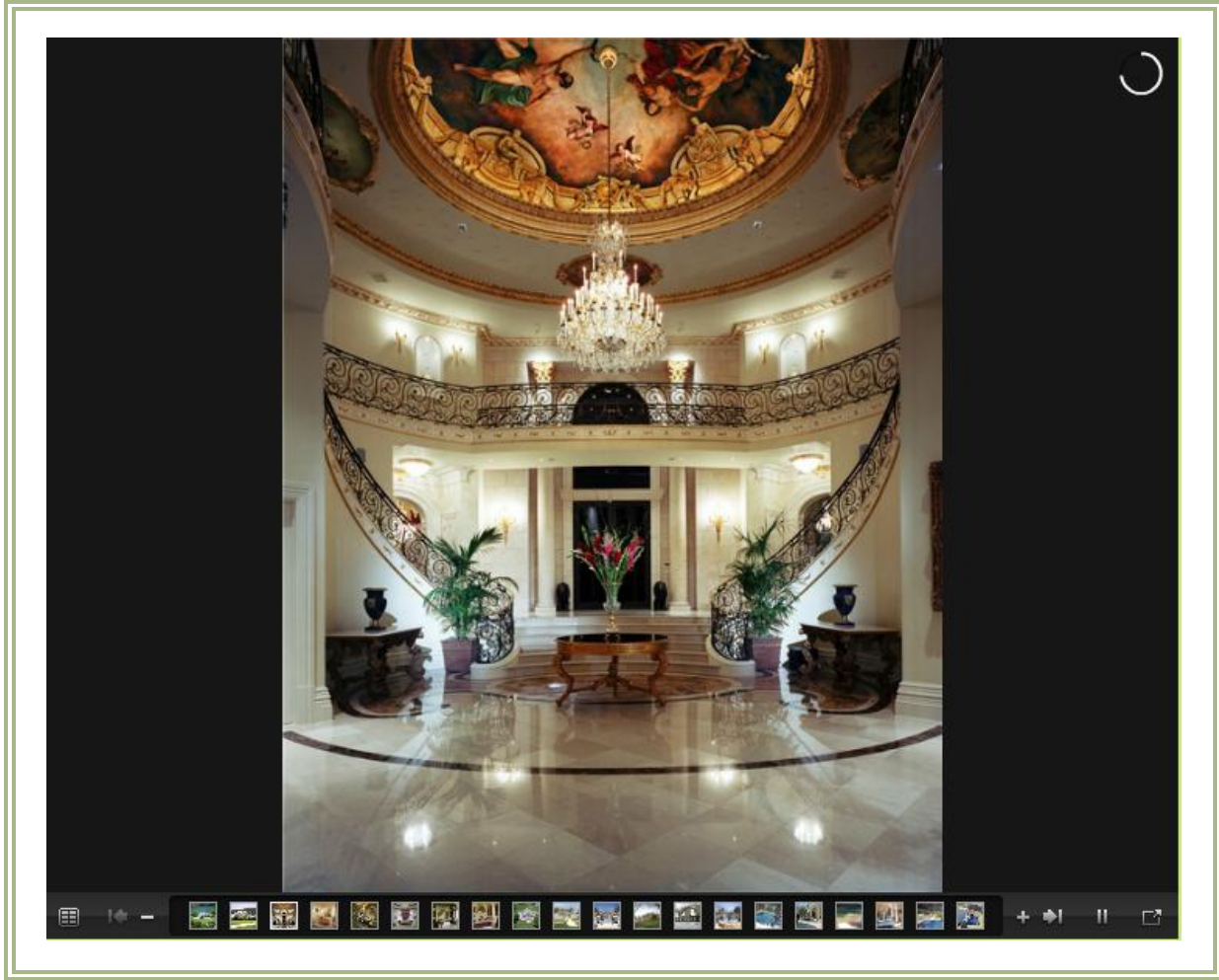


Bedrooms:	9	Inspired by the grandeur and opulence of the "Cottage" Mansions at the turn of the century in Newport, Rhode Island, this grand Lake Austin waterfront estate replicates those summer havens that became social and architectural landmarks for the aristocracy of the Gilded Age. This three story, nine bedroom estate sits riverside on Lake Austin, a guest house, helipad, and boathouse are just a few of the unique features accompanying this majestic estate.	HOME
Bathrooms:	12		FULL DETAILS
Area:	Lake Austin Waterfront		PHOTO TOUR
Style:	Estate Home		VIDEO TOUR
Sq. Ft.:	15,869		PRINT BROCHURE
Lot Size:	3.43 acres		CONTRACTS AND DISCLOSURES
Year Built:	2001		PROPERTY MAP
More Information »			AREA SCHOOLS
			SCHEDULE A SHOWING
			EMAIL PROPERTY INFO
			MORTGAGE CALCULATOR
			CONTACT ME

When the property goes under contract, you can use the property website with **the appraiser** so that all of the information is conveniently in one place. They appreciate the thoroughness, and I want to make sure they don't overlook anything. I also use it **after the sale** when other appraisers call me to ask about the property once it is closed. (saves me tons of time)

At **open houses**, I display the property website in the kitchen so that the slide show is playing. If someone has a question that I can't answer, the site serves as is a quick reference tool.

This is a fantastic tool and the foundation of my marketing plan for every home I list.



PRE-MLS MARKETING CAMPAIGN

There is always excitement about a home when the For Sale sign goes up in a neighborhood and a special allure when information about it isn't readily available. Our strategy is to capitalize on that excitement before we put the home into the MLS. We've sold many listings ourselves some generating multiple offers with this strategy.

At least two weeks before you are going to put the house in the MLS, **put the sign in the yard** with your name and phone number rider at the bottom. You may want to add a COMING SOON sign rider at the top. You could also use the **IVR sign rider** (discussed later) rather than your name and phone number rider so that you systematically collect names and phone numbers from each person that inquires. The point is that you want to personally talk to each person who has been driving that neighborhood to find a home. They are your best prospects. In some cases, and with some listings, we may never put them in the MLS and try to sell them in the "silent market" ourselves or with one of the agents in our luxury network.

Send out **Just Listed cards** to the neighbors and your special list of contacts inviting them to an **open house**. Hold the house open before you put the house on the market. You are giving them a “sneak preview,” a chance to help choose their new neighbor. With some listings, I’ll put a **Sunday Open House 2-4** sign rider on the sign the Friday before the open house if I want to generate traffic from the public. Then have your property brochure ready to hand out at the open house. (Remember, no price. Put the property website address on it instead.)

Keep a list (with IVR names and phone numbers are recorded for you) of every person that calls. After you’ve spoken to them, in closing say, “we always pre-market our listings before putting them into the MLS. Would you like to be notified first if another property comes onto the market in this neighborhood? May I have your email address?”

You can also invite all of the real estate agents that have either sold or listed a home in the area in the past year for a “private preview”. I’ll often hold a little luncheon at the listing and invite agents in my database that I think might have an interest in the property.

We can attribute over \$90,000 in commissions from one listing last year doing a pre-MLS marketing campaign. We got multiple offers and sold the house for full price, and then four other transactions followed with clients that we met from our pre-MLS marketing.

INTERIOR BROCHURE

We prepare either **property flyer or a property brochure** for the interior of each of our listings.

We do a one page, two sided, color flyer on nice paper (110 lb. 8.5 X 11 Index card stock so it is heavier than regular paper and prints nicely in our printer) for less expensive listings, and we print them in-house on our color laser jet printer. The flyer has professional photos of the home, the property details, some copy about the house and our contact information. We also put the property website address on the flyer so the buyer or their agent can get more information on the website. I invite agents to use the contract I’ve posted there to submit offers. It saves them time, and I get the contract with the terms I want since most of it is already filled out.

For more luxury homes, I order a **full color coated brochure** from Merrill Printing. (They are surprisingly reasonable in cost) Their brochures have either a coated or a matte finish, and both are really nice. The brochure that I like best is a coated fold-over with copy and photography on the front cover, the interior and the back. When folded, the size is 8 1/2 X 11 and opens like a horizontal note card. They have several good layouts to choose from.

There are **three really important things** about your interior brochures:

Don’t put the price on the interior brochure, just the **property website address**.

You must use **high resolution professionally shot photography**.

Always **proof and double proof** your brochure. Print the sample and have at least two other people proof it. You will be judged by your accuracy or your inaccuracies. Misspelled words or incorrect information let others know how closely you pay attention to detail.

I give the seller 50 interior brochures at a time and ask them to always keep 20 in the brochure stand. When they run low, they call my office for more. With vacant listings, I keep 20 in the brochure stand and another 40 in a brown envelope in a kitchen drawer so I can replenish them when I'm showing or checking on the listing.

Once the listing is sold, I **keep the extra brochures** in a box to "recycle." I use them as samples when I mail to expireds, when I go on listing appointments, etc.

Resource: Order high-end brochures at www.merrill4marketing.com Create an account, upload your information, logo and photo. Go to the **Brochures** tab and look at GP11S and GP1138S. The cost for either is \$660.00 (plus shipping) for 500, and they do next day delivery. You can change color, style, font, etc. and they are gorgeous. Be sure to **print and proof** before ordering. You must also have high-resolution photography.

EXTERIOR BROCHURE

Do not put out an exterior brochure until you've put the property in MLS. Otherwise, prospective buyers will get the information they want from your brochure or the property website without calling you.

We create a one page flyer for the exterior brochure box that has photos of the home and some written copy. We **do not put the price or the property website** on the brochure. Instead we put the **1-800# (IVR) with a special code** so we can track the source of the call to the exterior property brochure. By using the IVR code (explained fully later) we have a record of every call that comes in on the listing.

We print a **one page, one sided flyer in full color** on regular copy paper in house on our laser jet printer. I print 100 flyers at a time and give them to the seller so that they can keep the brochure box full. I ask the seller to make sure that there are always 15 brochures in the box at all times. I don't put exterior brochure boxes on vacant listings.

The benefit of **coding this flyer** to the seller is that you are **tracking every source** of your marketing and keeping a record of every prospective buyer. If there is a price change or you are having an open house, etc. you have their name and phone number to call and notify them. (Also a good source of new business for you!) These stats are also good to use with the seller if you are proposing a price reduction.

MINI BROCHURE

A mini brochure is a small fold over card that is the size of a business card when it is folded. It makes a tent card and can stand up on a countertop or fit nicely into a purse or coat pocket.

We make mini brochures for our listings because the sellers love them. I give the seller these handy little marketing pieces so that they can hand them out to their friends and family. The front of the card has the photo of the house and the web address of the property website. We want to drive their friends to the property website. The inside of the card has details about the house. The back of the card has your contact information on them.

I get mine done at the Quik Print, but you can also order them from Merrill Printing. Don't forget to **proof them** before printing!

Resource: Order mini brochures at www.merrill4marketing.com Create an account, upload your information, logo and photo. Go to the **Brochures** tab and look at GP153S. The cost for 500 is \$130 (plus shipping), and they do next day delivery. You can change color, style, font, etc. but be sure to **put the property website and not the price** on them. Also don't forget to **print and proof** before ordering. You must also have high-resolution photography.

INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE (IVR)

IVR is a call-capture system that captures buyer calls and sends them directly to your cell phone. A record is made in the "back end" of the system that records all of the caller's information so that you can call them later regarding price reductions, open houses, or a new property that has hit the market.

Simply put, the buyer dials an **800# and puts in a 4 digit code for more information or current pricing** on your listing. While the buyer is listening to a short pre-recorded message from you about your listing, the system texts you that the buyer is about to call. The text message gives you the caller's name, address and phone number, the address and a few details about the listing that he is calling on. Your recorded message asks the buyer to "Press 0 now for current pricing." When the caller presses 0, the call is then connected directly to you.

Each of your marketing pieces is **coded with a different number**. For example, I will assign my listing on Easy Street the code 204. All of the marketing on this Easy Street listing will bear this **code plus a number** after it that tells me where the call was generated. For instance, the sign rider will have the code 2041, the property brochure will have the code 2042, my Just Listed card will have the code 2043. By **changing the last number in the code**, I can track exactly where the call came from and I have a record of who called. Once the listing sells, you can assign the code to a new listing and begin the process over again.

The technology can be used in many other ways also, but this one is the one we use most often. It generates a **steady stream of calls** on our listings, and best yet, we have a **record of the calls** so we can **follow up and build a relationship** with the prospective buyers. (Did you know that 3 out of 4 prospects will work with you if you are the first agent they talk to? That means if you just spoke to 4 new prospects a week--and you were the first agent they talked to--you would have 3 new clients, week in, week out.)

To get the most out of the call or your appointment to show it, **text the caller back with the website address of your property website.** Let them know that they can see a slide show of photography, links to important documents and even a purchase contract if they want to make an offer. The marriage of IVR and the property website is a match made in heaven!

Resource: There are a number of IVR companies, but we like **Proquest Technologies** the best. We pay \$49.95 per month for unlimited use. They provide the sign riders for your For Sale signs for a small additional charge.

BY INVITATION OPEN HOUSE

Before you put the listing into the MLS, invite the neighbors for their “sneak peak” of the home. I print the invitation on the same card stock we use for our expired listing program. The front of the house is printed on the front of the card using the same technique we teach with the expired program. Across the bottom right hand corner of the front flap, print **You’re Invited....**

Inside the card, print:

Open House
Just for our Neighbors
123 Easy Street

Sunday, April 20, 2012
3-5 p.m.
Hosted by: Your Name
Your Company Name
Phone Number

I have an **Open House register** that I bought from a stationary store and ask the neighbors to sign it when they arrive. Each one is asked to help us choose their new neighbor, given a mini brochure with the property website address on it and sent a thank you for coming note afterward.

This is a good time to **invite area agents and their clients** who you want to give a sneak peak to as well. I send a Constant Contact e-flyer to agents who have listed or sold a home in the neighborhood in the last 12 months as well as to the real estate agents in the offices near the listing. I put **Pre-MLS in River Place** (or whatever the neighborhood is) in the subject line to get the email opened.

Sometimes, I'll do this as a **broker luncheon** on a weekday after one of the morning real estate tours and cater in a pasta salad, fruit salad and green salad luncheon with ice tea. The agents love it and appreciate getting the first opportunity to see and sell the listing. Put Open House sign up during the luncheon open house. I usually do it from 11:00-1:00pm.

THE BENEFIT PARTY TO SELL THE HOUSE

Some listings are perfect for special open houses or events, those by invitation only. Team up with a local charity and make "the party to sell the house" a benefit for that charity. Ask agents in your office to serve as ambassadors to sell and take tickets, serve refreshments, be room docents or tour guides and to pass out information about the home or charity. Ask some of your vendors (Lenders, closing attorney's, etc) to underwrite the expense of food, valet parking, invitations, etc. Perhaps the builder would provide some assistance from the suppliers who worked on the home.

An event like this is a chance to showcase the home's best features, give some exposure to the builder and craftsmen that worked on the house and benefit the charity. Everyone wins! Ask the charity to provide you with a list of their members/patrons to include on the guest list.

VIDEO TOURS

You can easily create a video tour by shooting a little introduction to the property with your iPad or iPhone mounted to a tripod. Stand in the entry of your listing where the light is good and film your introduction. "Hi welcome to 123 Park Avenue in the exclusive Highland Park neighborhood. I'm Laura Duggan with West Austin Properties and I'm here to show you this lovely home and share its special features." That's all you have to film live. Then take it back to your office and create a "video" tour in iMovie or Windows Live Movie Maker editing software by adding the intro you just shot to then dragging and dropping the professionally shot photographs into the movie. You can record the shots and do a voice over describing the home and the rooms or special features they are seeing to create your video. I'm not a big fan of music in the background so I leave that out. Keep the video short. You're trying give the viewer some information but also entice them to come see it. The last slide should have your contact information and the web address of the property website. You can host the video on your YouTube channel and post it in your property website. The first 25 characters in the title are the most important so put the address, MLS# and the name of the neighborhood then key words such as "homes for sale," "homes," "Austin real estate". In your description, start with the web address that you want people to go to, then add your name and phone number before describing the property. Add "tags" using short phrases or words to help people find your videos in their search.

Resource: Hdhatstore.com for universal mobile movie studio---Your iPad or iPhone snaps into the "mobile studio" and has mobile insert options for most camera phones. It comes complete with a 45XWide Angel Lens and has mounts for video light and shotgun mic. The super lightweight unit mounts on a regular tripod. \$170. Lavelier mic connects to iPad. \$80. Full size tripod \$45. This is a fantastic system. Visit their website at www.hdhstore.com

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HOW TO MAKE BIG \$\$ FAST WITH EXPIRED LISTINGS