

Real estate agents turn to Lexmark color printing technology as a competitive tool to improve their profile, get and retain clients and sell more property.

## Agents improve curb appeal, reputations and service with Lexmark color technology

The real estate business is competitive. Agents across the country are constantly looking for ways to differentiate themselves from the regional competition, reduce costs and get their jobs done more easily and quickly – all with a focus on serving sellers and buyers at heightened levels.

But, as in any business, time is of the essence and time spent on administrative tasks such as creating brochures and flyers, printing listings, contracts or other paperwork means less time spent selling property.

Increasingly, real estate agents are turning to technology as a competitive tool in their toolbox to improve their profile, get and retain clients and ultimately, sell more property.

Although the Internet has dramatically changed how prospective buyers search for homes and how sellers market them, the real estate business is still won and lost with hardcopy documents. Listings, brochures, contracts, postcards, flyers, announcements, and many other real estate documents can strengthen or degrade an agent's reputation, the initial impact of a property listing and the speed of the sale.

These documents can also become costly headaches for independent agents or administrative personnel who bear the brunt of the workload to develop, print, copy and pay for these documents.

Many agents still use local print shops to print documents, particularly color ones, at a high cost. This approach leaves little room for changes and takes precious time and money away from the agent. Suddenly, a price change on a particular listing means printing new brochures and throwing away the old ones.

A number of agents have taken a new approach to real estate document printing and have incorporated color inkjet and laser

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Tempe, Ariz.



printing technology into their offices. The impact of a small investment in color printing technology has yielded significant gains in time and cost savings for many agents, improved their reputations and led to stronger customer satisfaction and retention.

Specifically, there are three primary opportunities for time and cost improvements with color printing technology: selling property faster, improving the appeal of the agents themselves and streamlining administrative tasks.

### Selling Property

First impressions are a big deal in the real estate business. When prospective buyers visit a home for the first time, their first impressions can often make or break a sale. Agents talk about improving the “curb appeal” of a property - making it look as good as it possibly can for prospective buyers.

In truth, curb appeal starts well before a potential buyer steps foot through the threshold. Colorful property listings loaded with pictures and impactful descriptions are often displayed on yard signs to capture the attention of people passing by and to encourage potential buyers to take a look at the property.

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—Gale Fulton  
RE/MAX Creative Realty  
Lexington, Ky.



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The Lexmark C510 prints 30 pages per minute in black and white and eight pages per minute color, so one printer can be used to handle simple contracts and colorful listing pages. This approach saves space and supply costs by using fewer cartridges and supply items than operating two separate devices. But, the most discerning customer is often the seller.

“We have had sellers compliment us on how great their houses look in our printed materials,” said Gale Fulton, RE/MAX Creative Realty, Lexington, Ky. “The picture and document quality helps justify the price. That’s very important to our sellers.”

But, not all agents are going to tell their colleagues about the benefits of higher-quality printing. If marketing materials and documents are a competitive edge, why share the trade secret?

“Homes are averaging 120 days on the market here,” explained Kimberly Jones, RE/MAX Professional, Littleton, Colo. “If my choice of printer can help me reduce that average by 20 or 30 days, I’m not in a rush to tell my competitors, who are handing out blurry, black and white flyers.”

### Marketing the Agent’s Reputation

Agents grow their client base primarily through referrals in the community. Showcasing a positive and polished image for the agent is a cornerstone of the real estate industry.

“Most of my competitors are using black and white photos,” Fulton said. “My documents stand out because they’re in color, well-designed and

look very sharp. I know that customers tend to hold on to my flyers longer since I made the switch to printing on the Lexmark color laser printer.”

Building a reputation in the community as a highly qualified, respected real estate agent extends to the quality of documents that an agent presents to his or her clients.

“The quality of a printed document says something about you and the property you’re representing,” said Jones. “It matters how the flyer looks. Agents with blurry documents look like they don’t have their act together.”

Agents also heighten awareness of their services through a variety of marketing initiatives. This customer outreach can be a full-time job. Mailing lists of potential buyers quickly become outdated. Lists saved on office computers aren’t available when the agent is on the road. The time required for an agent to design and print a marketing piece interferes with the time needed to find and sell houses. And, printing all of it can be burdensome and costly.

“I’ve got to keep my name, face and phone number in front of people,” explained Fulton. Like other agents, she sends out thousands of postcards each year regarding new listings, recent sales, and open houses, as well as recognizing birthdays and other special events. She also prints reams of new listings and open-house literature to mail or personally deliver to prospective buyers.

Fulton and others have found color laser printing to be an affordable and fast method of completing these tasks within the walls of their office, rather than sending the documents out to a print shop to be printed in color.

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Denver, Colo.



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Markell & Associates Realtors  
Tampa, Fla.

Real estate brokers are also finding that technology can be an effective way at keeping good agents working for them.

“The real estate market is very competitive and keeping good agents is critical to our success,” said Bill Hart, a broker with Nobel Real Estate in Denver. “As a way to provide great customer service to our clients and retain our best agents, we provide our employees with the best technology tools available. This is a distinct advantage over other firms who nickel and dime the independent agents for such equipment and services.”

A specific example of top-notch technology that Hart provides to his agents is the Lexmark C510 color laser printer. “Our agents are very busy and they want to portray the best image possible to the seller and the buyer,” he said. “The Lexmark C510 color laser printer prints beautiful listings, brochures and open house flyers very, very quickly. Time and image are both imperative to our agents.”

### Streamlining Administrative Tasks

Real estate agents are compensated for selling property, not printing documents or fixing faulty technology equipment. Top-performing agents have discovered that the technology choices they make and have access to can make a difference in the amount of time they

spend selling, versus the time they spend printing critical documents or dealing with faulty equipment. Printer failure or poor print quality is not an option 20 minutes before an open house, for example.

“If something's not working, everybody comes to me,” explains Beverly Carroll, Choice Realty Office Manager in Denver. “Our previous devices were always jamming, always getting stuck. One printer took 10 minutes to warm up and print one copy, and yet I frequently get requests from agents for 25 color copies in five minutes.”

For those agents working independently or from home, there is no office manager to set up and manage the printer, so the printer has to be easy to use and maintain.

“Setting up Lexmark's X6170 and installing the software took me about five minutes,” said Alvin Rodd of Markell & Associates Realtors in Tampa, Fla.

Fulton agrees. “Installation was a piece of cake,” she said. “The cords only fit in one place. You can't mess it up. I was a little intimidated at first, but once I started to install the C510, it was very simple.”

### The Results

With real estate competition on the rise in almost every community in the country, agents must put their best foot forward, differentiate themselves and optimize their services to appeal to more buyers and sellers. A small investment in color printing technology can make a stronger first impression, draw new buyers and sellers, keep good agents at the firm, heighten marketing efforts and reduce administrative burdens and overall costs.

**Lexmark has partnered with the National Association of Realtors to offer real estate professionals exclusive savings on a broad range of Lexmark printers, ink and toner cartridges. For more information or to order Lexmark printers, visit [Lexmark.com/NAR](http://Lexmark.com/NAR) or call 1 (800) 453-9835 code NAR (627).**