



Nothing But Net

Get Your Website Right

By Randy Schmidt

The days of a static website getting the job done are gone. You need more and you know it. However, just posting rates on your site won't cut it either. We all need to advance and move into this century today. Why? That's where the new borrower is, so you need to be there, too.

I recently read an article that said, "Some of the nation's leading mortgage sites have responded by working to become more consumer-friendly. Their revamped sites, they say, will let borrowers not only browse lender rates and terms, but learn about market trends and read comments from other shoppers." Now that's what I'm talking about. Here's how you can accomplish this goal:

The article I talked about earlier went on to quote Keith T. Gumbinger, the vice president of HSH Associates, which tracks mortgage rates and provides rate quotes from lenders. He says that while there is plenty of mortgage information out there, much of what has been available on the Web until recently is "broad but shallow."

"Consumers often can't get some of the more technically oriented stuff," he said, citing explanations of when an adjustable-rate mortgage actually adjusts, or prepayment penalties apply. So, you need to educate them on your site.

So, who gets it right? LendingTree has a good online strategy and a very user friendly website. In fact, they're using their Web presence to go even further. Nicole Hall, a spokeswoman for LendingTree, said in the article, "We've been doing a lot of development of information resources for consumers over the past year," citing the company's growing list of how-to tips for first-time buyers and those wanting to refinance.

Bradford National Bank and The Provident Bank are other good examples.

Bradford National Bank launched its full-service online lending program more than a year ago. By rethinking online lending solutions, lenders can position themselves to realize new opportunities, grow revenue, cut costs and expand into multiple online lending channels. These new, advanced, online lending solutions allow lenders to compete with lenders of all sizes.

By providing an instant decision, mortgage lenders can gain a competitive advantage, fulfilling the borrower's requirements and allowing them to stop shopping. These online lending technology solutions deliver administrative tools that allow us to easily set up the system (including multiple lending channels, consumer, personal, car loans), easily enhance and update

the system when we chose to go down that road, instead of submitting a change request and waiting for a response.

In order to improve their customers experience while seizing market opportunities, The Provident Bank made the strategic decision to begin engaging in e-Lending initiatives. The Provident Bank continues to seek new ways to provide its business and personal banking customers with the products and services they need to manage their financial resources in an increasingly complex environment.

Another component on the path to e-lending is offering online lending tools through a comprehensive web portal suite that provides multiple lending options such as consumer loans, personal lines of credit, second mortgages, auto loans, mortgages, and small business loans. Online, tech savvy borrowers want a lending medium that is easy to use, provides instant information and immediate responses. At The Provident Bank, “We meet the borrowers at their needs level and provide transparency throughout the entire lending process stated David Boone.

“We are able to deliver a streamlined application methodology that automatically processes an application fee, pulls credit, LP and populates directly into our LOS and provides the borrower with an instant decision. This automation workflow eliminates several steps and creates greater efficiency in the lending process. By providing an instant decision, we have fulfilled the borrower’s requirements and allowed them to stop shopping. This has increased our pull-through rates over 60% in addition to gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace.”

In today’s market if you want to stay competitive it is critical to provide the type of online lending platform that borrowers are looking for.

Randy Schmidt is President of Data-Vision, Inc. and is responsible for overall operation and strategic planning for the company. Randy became involved in the IT side of mortgage banking almost 30 years ago and has been involved in numerous projects on both the origination and servicing side of the business. In 1993, Randy co-founded Data-Vision, Inc., in Mishawaka, Indiana as a Web design company. He then combined his previous mortgage experience with Internet knowledge to bring the speed, power and availability of the internet to the Mortgage industry. He can be reached at rschmidt@d-vision.com.