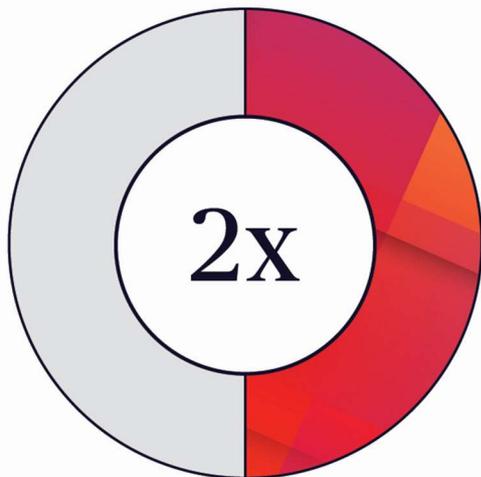


# Lead capture 101 for estate agents

*In this article, we uncover the importance of lead capture in a turbulent post-Covid environment - and reveal the surprisingly powerful, yet often overlooked, basics that can drive more conversions to your agency and transform business overnight!*

## The Covid-19 effect: how have call volumes changed during the pandemic?

Following the news of lockdown, as with many industries, the property sector saw a sudden and steep decline in call volumes. However, once the market began to reopen in England in May, our property clients saw call volumes propel to pre-lockdown levels - and beyond! The number of calls has continued to rise week by week and demand is currently sky-high. In fact, our stats show that volumes have doubled compared with pre-lockdown figures from the first week of March.



Our stats show that call volumes have **doubled** compared to pre-lockdown figures from the first week of March.

Interestingly, live chat volumes remained consistent throughout lockdown as customers sought reassurance and more and more of us went online to interact and request information.

Since agencies reopened, we've seen property chats rise by 20% as the UK resumed its property searches from a safe distance.

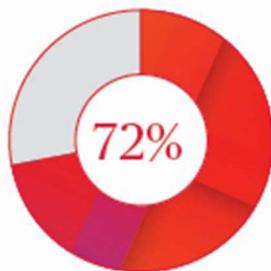
Estate agents are busier than ever and are currently having to contend with some of their biggest challenges to date - with social distancing measures, furloughed staff, and a brand new approach to business.

There is, of course, the potential for more volatility ahead and so it's critical for agents to pay close attention to their lead process in order to ensure a smooth and prosperous recovery.

## The phone is still king!

Despite the surge in popular online channels and platforms, customers still prefer to pick up the phone. When faced with a complex purchase, like buying a house, you'll find most customers want to talk to a qualified human expert first.

We know that 72% of sellers reach out to agents over the phone initially. That's why over half of UK estate agents (53%) back the phone as their most valuable channel - showing just how crucial it is to answer every call.



**72% of sellers** reach out to agents initially over the telephone.

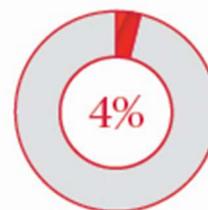
The next most popular ways to contact agents are:



Email



Web form  
or live chat



Popped into  
a branch

This is followed by a smaller portion of clientele who prefer to connect online via email, live chat, or web form - and finally, that small 4% who would rather pop into your office to talk in-person.

## Understanding your lead process

Before you can improve your conversion rate, you must first understand where your customers are coming from. You don't need a costly platform or technical expertise to do this! Start by simply asking your callers how they heard about you or the property they're enquiring about - was it through social media, your website, Rightmove? Was it a referral?

Make use of tools such as Google Analytics (which is free!) to look in more depth at your web traffic - where is it originating from and what pages are gaining the most hits? How does this compare to the number of calls and online bookings you've had?

Keep note of the channels your customers are enquiring through, whether that's phone, email, web form - as well as the lead source that's led them there, i.e. a webinar, newspaper ad, Rightmove listing, etc.

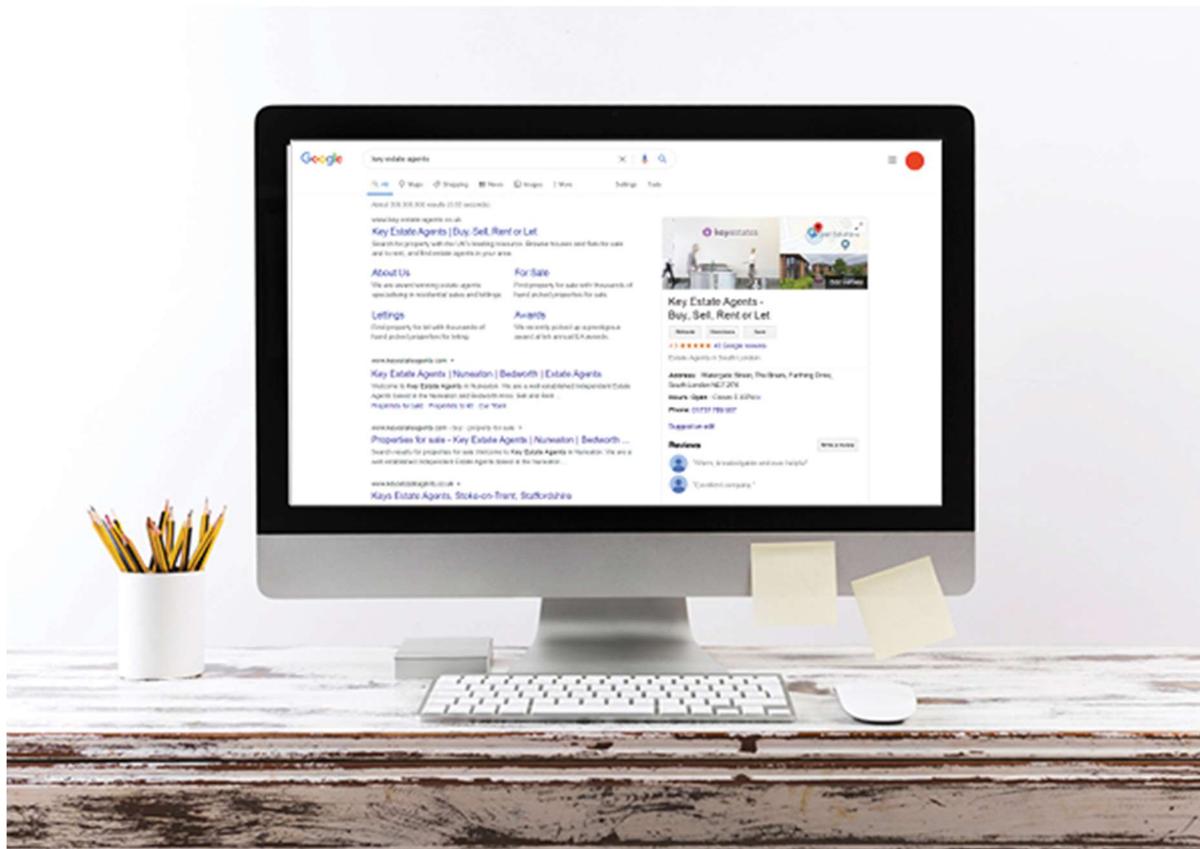
Once you have this data you'll soon be able to make transformational adjustments to your marketing spends and hone in on the areas that drive more revenue - ultimately reducing your cost per lead and customer acquisition.

## Making your online presence count

While we know the phone remains the most popular way for customers to get in touch - what is it that drives them there in the first place? The most typical starting point of any vendor's client journey begins on Google. It's here that the most important part of your lead journey happens; where your potential vendor will size up your agency, get a feel for your brand and gather the credentials to move forward.

### Your Google listing

Though it may only be 15% of vendors who find agents solely through Google, irrespective of the initial trigger to contact you, almost every vendor will Google you to get information like your contact number, email address, directions and to get an idea of your fees. And while you may think your organic Google listing is out of your control - think again! There are a number of simple yet effective steps you can take to ensure your customers are finding this vital information quickly and easily - starting with the first step of claiming your Google My Business Listing.



Once this is done, run through **this checklist** to ensure your listing is fully optimised:

- **Select the 'Estate Agent' category;** this will help Google recognise your business model and ensure customers can find your agency easily.
- **Ensure the address details and opening hours are correct;** it may sound obvious, but making sure this information is accurate for each branch is so important. This will allow customers to decide when and where to contact or visit you.
- **Ensure your contact number/s is up to date;** likewise, 28% of our clicks to call come via our Google listing and not the website, so getting this right and ensuring it's a number that is being answered is surprisingly powerful.
- **Add a Covid-19 status;** this new, but underused, feature is hugely important right now, especially in light of business recovery. Google will flag that your opening hours may differ due to the pandemic so reassure your clients that you *are* open.

## Google reviews

One of the most powerful ways to drive leads to your business and convince a vendor to choose your agency is through your Google reviews. A lack of reviews can cause people to question your legitimacy while a negative review can be detrimental to your reputation.

Don't be afraid to actively encourage your customers to leave a review on Google and provide feedback on their experience with your agency. This will work wonders for your Google ranking - and your leads!

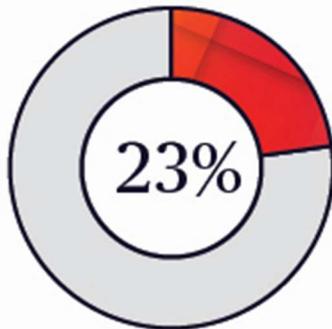
Unfortunately, negative reviews will sometimes arise - it's important to address these concerns, both publicly and personally, to show not only the disgruntled customer that you're listening and you care, but to also demonstrate to potential clients that you're acting on the feedback and making any necessary improvements to your service.

### Your website

On the whole, traffic to agents' websites is low - with 84% of sites having fewer than 1,000 sessions per month. This is unsurprising given that online portals dominate the market - but this said, it's still vital to optimise your online presence from every angle and make sure you maximise each web visit.



So, where are agents missing out? Only 50% of agencies are currently using Google Analytics, this offers a huge opportunity to get ahead of the competition. By simply understanding more about visitors browsing your site, i.e. bounce rate and where people are clicking and converting, you can make valuable changes that will improve your web performance and ultimately drive more leads.



**24% have not  
been optimised for  
mobile design.**

On a similar note, 24% of agencies still haven't optimised their site for mobile users. With almost half of your customers visiting your site via their mobile phones or tablet devices, it's essential to ensure your site is mobile-friendly and that visitors can easily navigate their way around it, quickly grabbing the information they're looking for.

## Adapting to your clients

Times are changing - and so are client behaviours. In a world fuelled by instantaneity, your clients want to contact you on their terms and expect a speedy response - be it out of office hours, over the weekend, or even in the middle of the night!

With so much technology at our fingertips, and more and more businesses providing 24-hour support, it's no longer enough to leave potential clients in the hands of your voicemail or waiting on a response - with 69% of callers admitting they won't leave a message on your answering machine.

Adding a tool such as live chat to your website is a really effective way to resolve obstacles such as unmanned office phones or crowded email inboxes. This powerful tool not only provides an easy route for clients searching for further information or some quick advice, but it also offers staff a seamless solution on which to triage enquiries more efficiently and work flexibly, from wherever there's an internet connection.

**40% of calls result  
in a new enquiry.**

Meanwhile, opening up your phone lines beyond the typical 9-5 is a guaranteed way to invite more leads - with 40% of calls resulting in a brand new enquiry, every call counts. Not everybody will have the resource or the budget to do this in-house, but Money Penny can offer affordable and flexible support around-the-clock to cover your out-of-hours calls so that no opportunity slips through the net.

**Want to find out more? Chat to us today on 0333 202 1005 to discover how we can help your agency grow or visit [www.moneypenny.com/uk/property](http://www.moneypenny.com/uk/property) for more information.**

### What our clients say...

“

We couldn't operate without Money Penny.

Gaven Swan  
Chief Operation Officer  
Keller Williams



“

Money Penny is perfect for any busy agency - we're so impressed.

Katie Darlow  
Sales Director  
Roberts Estate Agents



*\*Kate Cox is Chief Marketing Officer of Money Penny*