

The secret to handling 400+ buyer enquiries each week? It's a bot

Could you do with 400 leads per week?

The realisation that it's simply not possible for real estate agents to handle buyer enquiries over a certain threshold manually has led this regional agent to an ingenious solution.

Ray White Mildura director Damian Portaro said with so much buyer inquiry now coming to him via social media, he invested "a lot of money" into developing a bot.

"I launched six to seven properties last week. I think I've had about 400 inquiries in the last week through my Facebook, through Messenger," he outlined.

"I can't handle that. "No one can handle that sort of volume as an individual."

With an automated system and bots doing all the background work now, Mr Portaro said it's been "a massive, massive play".

The regional real estate agent acknowledged that while he has spent a lot of money on such systems, it's paying off — given he is generating more buyer inquiry from Facebook than he is from pay-to-play property platforms.

He also argued it's a strategy that not many agents are using — but they should be.

"I talk to so many agents and it's not happening; I'm in a little regional town and we're doing it," he said.

"Everyone's doing what they're used to doing."

It's despite the game having well and truly changed for agents who are just starting out in the industry now.

"It used to be Agent 1.0," he said.

"Agent 1.0 had been in the game for 25 years, played footy, played cricket, was there forever, grew up there, and didn't really have a database and didn't really have any systems, but everyone knew him.

"Fast-forward to where we are now: young agents or new agents have the ability to get massive leverage early on.

"When I started, there was no such thing as doing that. I just had to outwork everybody." Now, he said all agents "have the ability to build a massive profile immediately, just by doing key things right".

While Mr Portaro may only have around 4,500 likes on his Facebook page, he said it's a different story on the backend — he has access to about 195,000 profiles. He explained: "We use it very strategically and then we target and we re-target."

From the director's perspective, "it's a way to leverage yourself massively".

But he doesn't believe he's doing anything too special, adding that "it would do the same for anyone that heads down that path".

"Like I said, I spent a lot of money to develop these social media platforms, but it works. It works in a big way. Last year, my videos had a million views, then my impressions were about 4 million," he said.

"And again, I'm only a little area — I'm running a Mildura population of 50 to 60,000!"

Arguing that it's not just about the agency anymore, Mr Portaro expressed that "it's about the agent and what the agent can do and what the agent can bring". Using social media is "an easy way to do it", he concluded.