

# Shorewest REALTORS Achieves 50% Average Monthly Jump in Search-Engine Generated Visitors with VHT ImageWorks

## Customer Profile: Shorewest REALTORS

Since its origin in 1946, Shorewest REALTORS has always been a family-owned company dedicated to helping other families in Wisconsin. The brokerage has grown from a one-person office in Wauwatosa to 23 sales offices covering a 12-county area. The Shorewest family now includes over 1,300 people as committed to Wisconsin as the day John A. Horning started the company out of his home over 65 years ago.

## Challenge

According to the National Association of REALTORS, 94 percent of home buyers are researching properties online. They typically start their research on major search engines such as Google. Third-party aggregators such as Zillow, Trulia and REALTOR.com take brokers' syndicated property listings and have implemented massive search-optimization programs around listings data to achieve top rankings in search engine results.

Shorewest was seeking help competing with big aggregators and other real estate sites for site visitors from search engines. The company's goal was getting to the top spot on the list of most popular real estate Websites, and maintaining such a position, in its target geographic market of Milwaukee and southern Wisconsin.

Shorewest did not share listings with Zillow. In late 2010/early 2011, it turned off syndication to Trulia and opted out of REALTOR.com's Cooperating Broker Connection Program. The brokerage felt listing aggregators' advertising-based business models weren't compatible with its business. It did not want to pay for leads on its own listings and did not want to compete for search engine visitors with its own listings on third-party sites.

The brokerage also wanted to utilize its library of property images to strengthen its search engine optimization (SEO) program.



## Critical Need:

Attracting more visitors from search engines to Shorewest.com than any other real estate site

**Solution:** VHT ImageWorks

## Results:

- Significantly increased volume of keywords and search terms associated with Shorewest.com
- 50 percent increase in visitors from search engines to Shorewest.com
- Improved online experience for visitors to Shorewest.com
- More closed sales transactions
- Increased commission dollars to agents
- No. 1 on list of most-visited real estate sites in its target geographic market

## Joe Horning, President, Shorewest REALTORS:

- *"We looked at other providers but what they were doing wasn't as encompassing as VHT ImageWorks. When we saw VHT's platform, we knew it was what we were looking for and we liked the fact that it's a turnkey solution."*
- *"Implementing VHT ImageWorks wasn't labor intensive. It was quick to roll out. And the results we're getting are exceeding our expectations. I recommend VHT ImageWorks to any broker."*

## Solution

Shorewest chose VHT ImageWorks because of the platform's comprehensive, turnkey approach and the unrivaled online marketing expertise of VHT's team.

"We were impressed with VHT's capabilities. We felt we could trust them as true partners. They were behind us in supporting the brokerage community."

The first digital marketing platform developed for residential real estate brokerages, VHT ImageWorks positioned Shorewest as the original source of its property listings information on the web and significantly increased the volume of keywords and search terms on Shorewest.com.

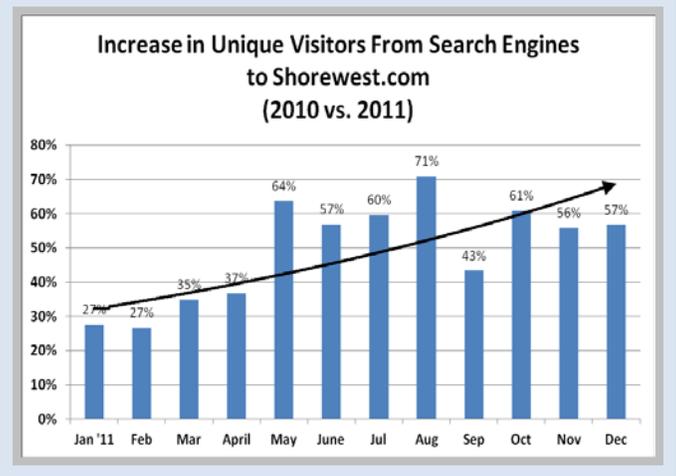
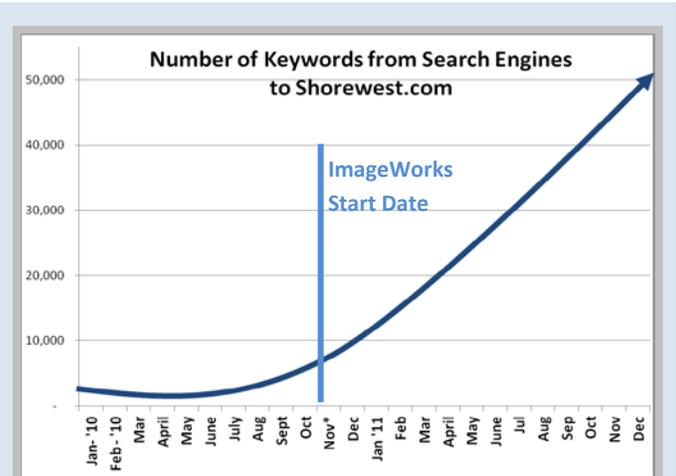
VHT ImageWorks strategically leverages Shorewest's visual assets on the web and utilizes cutting-edge SEO techniques to connect the brokerage directly with home buyers researching properties online. The platform offers an improved experience to Shorewest.com visitors by digitally optimizing property photos on the web, creating videos with music and narration, and posting videos on YouTube, DailyMotion and other popular sites.

Home buyers are directed to Shorewest's listing agents rather than to advertisers. This ensures that Shorewest's agents don't lose sales opportunities, and that inquiries on listings are being handled by experts.

## Results

- Implementation of VHT ImageWorks in November 2010 was quick and required minimal labor on the part of Shorewest.
- In 2011, on a year-over-year basis, the brokerage experienced a **273 percent average monthly jump in the number of keywords** and search terms associated with Shorewest.com.
- The increase in keywords provided a significant lift in the volume of search engine visitors to Shorewest.com within three months (the time it takes for search engines to index the site's increased volume of keywords). In 2011, **search-engine generated traffic to Shorewest.com rose year-over-year by an average of 50 percent on a monthly basis**. By comparison, real estate search traffic declined nationally during 2011.

- In May 2011, Shorewest.com rose to the **No. 1 spot as the most-visited real estate Website** in Milwaukee, ahead of REALTOR.com, Yahoo! Real Estate, Zillow and Trulia, according to Hitwise.
- The additional visitors to Shorewest.com resulted in **an incremental increase of 59 completed sales transactions per month that produced \$166,416 in commission dollars per month** to Shorewest sales agents.



## About VHT Inc.

VHT is a leading provider of digital marketing technology and services to companies offering unique properties, locations and products who need a comprehensive, cost-effective solution for customer acquisition and driving revenue on the web. VHT ImageWorks is an integrated and automated platform that includes a comprehensive array of tools that businesses need to increase site traffic, leverage their visual assets and improve sales conversion. The platform requires minimal effort on clients' part, and has delivered measurable results to industry-leading brands by increasing the volume of visitors from search engines and engaging online visitors with alluring visual presentations of their offering.