



# Conversion Playbook

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# Why we built this playbook

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**At Zillow, our goal is to help customers unlock life's next chapter.**

To do this, we know it's essential to partner with agents who share this mission, and who aim to deliver an exceptional home-buying or selling experience. That's why we created this playbook — to equip you with the best insights and resources for adopting a customer-first mindset, so you can ultimately win more business.

To gather these findings, we turned to data-backed industry research, top-converting Zillow Premier Agent partners and Zillow Agent Advisory Board<sup>1</sup> members. We looked at our data and conducted in-depth interviews with more than 50 elite real estate businesses, diving deep into their sales process and observing their interactions with clients to uncover proven strategies for conversion. We've distilled our findings into this playbook, and we're excited to share them with you.

We will continue to make updates to this playbook to share the most relevant information for today's marketplace.

Nothing in this playbook is intended to be legal advice, and you are not required to follow this playbook in order to be a Zillow Premier Agent partner. For specific questions about any duties or obligations arising out of a real estate transaction, check your local and state licensing laws and regulations or consult with a local attorney.

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<sup>1</sup> Zillow's Agent Advisory Board is composed of top-performing partners. These partners are advocates in the industry and support Zillow's long-term vision.

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# Core principle: Customer first

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In 2022, approximately one out of four US home buyers reached out to a Zillow Premier Agent partner. With Zillow being one of the largest online real estate marketplaces in the United States, Zillow Premier Agent partners unlock opportunities to turn online home shoppers into happy, lasting clients — and we believe the most effective way to do this is by putting the customer's experience first.

The initial conversation with a buyer or seller is the perfect opportunity to make a great first impression and lay the foundation for a strong relationship. One way to do this is to focus on the person on the other end of that phone call, not the property they contacted you about. If you limit your conversation to the home and it ends up being under contract or already sold, the conversation might end there. So instead, dig in to understand the customer's wants and needs. Create an opportunity that moves beyond a specific home and broadens their search to include additional options that might be exactly what they're looking for.

## Best of Zillow: Evaluating and rewarding success

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We want to help more people get home, and we can't do this without the help of the best agents in the industry. The Best of Zillow program recognizes our top-performing partners — those who share our goals and deliver excellence across six key metrics. As of September 2023, partners who earn Best of Zillow status convert clients at an average of 3.85x the rate of other Zillow Premier Agent partners. In return for their exceptional performance, we reward these partners with exclusive opportunities to grow their business, convert more clients and deepen their partnership with Zillow.

Best of Zillow assesses your performance during key moments that take place from the very first connection call to the closing of a successful transaction. These moments became six key metrics and were selected based on their correlation to higher conversion — meaning, Best of Zillow should be seen as your blueprint for success.

### The six Best of Zillow metrics include:

- Answer rate
- ALM Appointment rate (Appointment, Location, Motivation)
- Show rate
- Conversion rate
- Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM) usage
  - **Includes:** Sending a text message or email, adding a note, logging a follow-up task, adding or adjusting a contact status, adjusting timeframe to move, adding a transaction or Dotloop, etc.

The Best of Zillow Report (found in your Zillow Premier Agent profile) provides real-time transparency into your performance within each of these metrics. This helps you identify which areas you and your team should focus on to improve your overall performance. Leveraging the best practices outlined throughout this playbook will help you set your business up for success and work toward achieving Best of Zillow.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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For more information on the Best of Zillow Program, register for the 15-minute on-demand course **“Best of Zillow”** on Zillow Academy. We recommend completing courses on a computer for the best experience.

# Connection and lead types

Zillow's goal is to connect Zillow Premier Agent partners with customers who are actively searching for a home and ready to speak with an agent. Let's review the various types of leads you may receive:

## Standard connections:

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When a buyer finds a property they're interested in, they can submit their information through a contact form or by calling the number shown. Zillow will connect them by phone to a local Zillow Premier Agent partner.

## Tour connections:

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These are leads who indicate their preference for an in-person or video tour. You'll be connected with the buyer to set the appointment and discuss next steps in their home-buying journey.

- When a new tour request comes in, first check your schedule and confirm if you or your team are available on the requested date. Only accept tours for dates you can support.

## Direct contacts:

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These are buyers who contact you from your profile, or directly call or text your Zillow unique number.

- Your Zillow unique number appears at the bottom right of your profile in your **Professional Information** section. It's a number Zillow assigns to you to track leads who reach out directly through your profile, and to control spam. If you are getting spammed or would like to change your tracking number, contact Partner Support by calling 888-466-3501.

## Nurture leads:

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When a buyer indicates they're not ready to speak with an agent, the buyer is directly assigned to a Premier Agent partner's inbox. We recommend checking in with these leads regularly to best support the buyer when they are ready to move forward.

## Tips for receiving new connections:

- 1 Turn on in-app connections in the Zillow Premier Agent mobile app. This allows you to see property information and key insights (including what a buyer is searching for and saving) during the live call transfer.
- 2 Leverage the insights provided to build rapport with a buyer on the connection call in preparation for the first appointment.

## Accepting in-app connection calls



\*Screen images simulated

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For more information and assistance with setting up in-app connections, register for a session of Zillow's live instructor-led course **"Premier Agent App Essentials"** on Zillow Academy.

# Best practices for connection calls

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**Relevant Best of Zillow metrics:** Answer rate and ALM Appointment rate

**Answer rate:** Every standard connection from Zillow starts with an agent answering the phone. Consistency and discipline at the top of the funnel help drive bottom line results. Strong teams focus on treating every connection call as an opportunity to secure a relationship with a new home buyer. **The target answer rate for Best of Zillow is 60%.**

**ALM Appointment rate:** Leverage the ALM framework (Appointment, Location, Motivation) to ask for the in-person or virtual appointment at the start of every connection call. When a buyer and agent confirm an appointment on the connection call, they are 3x more likely to transact. The ALM Appointment rate is measured by the percent of connection calls where an appointment is discussed (within the last three months). Scheduling an appointment or talking to the customer about the date and time they want to meet are a few examples of how you can boost this metric. **The target rate for Best of Zillow is 60%.**







Begin the call by greeting the customer by name, introducing yourself and acknowledging the customer's tour request. For example:

*"Hi [customer name], this is [agent name], a local agent with [brokerage name]. Zillow just connected us and I see you're interested in touring [address]."*

Keep in mind that an active customer has almost always done some research before we connect them to you via a connection call, and may have questions about the property. Instead of focusing on property specifics, top partners recommend shifting the focus of your connection calls to building a relationship with the customer and understanding what they need in a home. If your customer is not local or cannot take an in-person tour of the property, you can offer a live video tour or a recorded video walkthrough of the property instead.

**Each connection call has three goals:**

- Secure the appointment
- Determine where the buyer is looking to move
- Understand why they selected that particular property

You can follow the **ALM** framework for structuring all connection calls around these objectives:

## A

### Appointment

Whether the lead came in as a phone connection, tour request or nurture lead, your goal is to secure the appointment. This question should come as soon as possible in the conversation. For example:

- *“I see you’re interested in [property address]...Great, when would you like to go see the property?”*
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## L

### Location

After setting the in-person or virtual appointment, ask what other properties or areas the buyer is interested in. Doing this will help you establish the buyer’s ideal location. Also, offer to find additional properties that meet their needs. This gives you an alternative if the first property doesn’t work out, while also demonstrating your value as a buyer’s agent who can help with their entire home search. For example:

- *“What other properties have you been looking at? I’d be happy to arrange [in-person or video] tours for those as well.”*
  - *“Are you only interested in this area, or are you open to seeing alternative locations and neighborhoods?”*
- 

## M

### Motivation

Understanding a customer’s motivation to move is critical if you want to identify homes that best fit their criteria, build rapport and establish a long-term relationship. Exploring this subject in the initial conversation is a crucial first step in becoming a trusted advisor throughout the buying process. For example:

- *“What interests you about this property?”*
- *“How long have you been looking?”*

**Note:** When working with sellers, top Agent Advisory Board members recommend adding “C” (Clarify) to the ALM framework (CALM) to help **clarify** your role as a listing agent. This helps the seller understand who you are and how you can help them before setting the first appointment in the seller’s home.

## Next steps

At the end of the call, review the next steps with the buyer and confirm when you will meet them for the appointment. You can leverage the Premier Agent app to recap your conversation and save the buyer’s information using a note on the contact.

## Get to know your client

With every connection call your goal should be to create a long-term, working relationship and to reinforce that trusted partnership with every follow-up conversation. The following example questions are highly recommended by top-performing agent partners (in addition to ALM) to help create trust during the connection call and during subsequent tours with the buyer.

- *“What’s the biggest motivator in your decision to buy right now?”*
  - *Follow-up questions might be, “Are you a first-time buyer?” or “Are you relocating for work?”*
- *“What questions do you have about the home-buying process?”*
- *“What interests you about this location?”*
- *“What is the best way to get in touch with you? Do you prefer text, phone or email?”*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Learn how a top Zillow Premier Agent partner leverages the ALM framework in the 14-minute course **“Partner-Led Learning: Securing Client Relationships Through Touring”** on Zillow Academy.



## How to navigate sensitive topics on connection calls

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The following guidelines around sensitive topics can help you make a positive first impression and get that appointment, all while demonstrating your interest in the customer and helping them feel confident.



### How to address the buyer's financial readiness

If the buyer proactively brings up financing on the connection call, acknowledge that they are taking a big step in the home-buying process, and convey that you look forward to discussing financing together more at the first appointment.

**Avoid** asking pointed questions about the buyer's financial situation. Asking about the buyer's finances prior to building rapport may be off-putting.

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## How to address detailed questions about the property

Focus on setting the appointment, fostering a relationship and gathering the customer's questions. The majority of buyers will not transact on the first home they inquire on, so use this opportunity to build rapport. Assure them that you'll have all of the answers to their questions at the time of the showing, or follow up with them later to offer solutions based on their needs.

**Avoid** trying to answer all of a customer's questions about a property live, especially if you don't know the answers. Pulling up the property info may cause you to appear knowledgeable about the property, leading the buyer to believe you're the listing agent.



## What to do if the buyer is confused about who they're speaking with, or thinks you're the listing agent

Let the buyer know how you can help them as a local buyer's agent. Introducing yourself clearly at the start of the call and immediately asking when they'd like to tour the property can also help mitigate confusion.

**Avoid** redirecting the buyer to a different point of contact or ending the call before setting the appointment and establishing next steps. Some buyers may not know the difference between a buyer's agent and listing agent — securing the appointment reinforces that you can help them with their home search.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Learn how a top Zillow Premier Agent partner navigates sensitive topics in the 13-minute course **[“Partner-Led Learning: Real World Objection Handling: Agent Takeaways and Tips”](#)** on Zillow Academy.

# Following up after the call

**Relevant Best of Zillow metric:** Customer Satisfaction (CSAT)

Your chances of securing successful virtual or face-to-face appointments increase greatly when you follow up to confirm the appointment after the call. This practice communicates your organization and eagerness to work together — both qualities that customers value. After the call, Zillow sends a customer satisfaction survey to the buyer to evaluate their experience and next steps. **The Best of Zillow program standard is a CSAT score of 90+.**

**In order to continue to deliver value after the connection, we recommend these best practices:**



**Follow up within two business hours by text and email in the Premier Agent app,** confirming the time and date of the showing. A calendar invitation is also a great way to make sure everyone has the same information. Provide a tour itinerary (including where to meet) if applicable.



**Follow up by text in the Premier Agent app a few hours before the appointment,** if the showing is scheduled for a time more than 24 hours after the initial follow-up.

**Note:** Top partners recommend confirming the appointment in a way that doesn't encourage a cancellation. For example, it's better to say, "I'll be heading to 123 Main St. for our 4 p.m. tour. Looking forward to meeting you soon!" as opposed to "Are we still on for 4 p.m.?"

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For additional connections best practices, register to attend a session of the live instructor-led course **"Connection Call Success Strategies"** on Zillow Academy.

# Best practices for touring

**Relevant Best of Zillow metric:** Show rate

Agents should use the **Showing Homes** contact status within the Zillow Premier Agent app when they are helping a customer tour properties in-person or virtually over multiple appointments. Your show rate is based on the percent of live connections delivered in the last six months that are moved to the **Showing Homes** status. **To be eligible for Best of Zillow, the target show rate is 15%.**

**Zillow Agent Advisory Board members have recommended the following for a successful tour appointment:**



## Prepare

Prepare for the appointment to tailor your approach to the buyer and their unique needs. Create a detailed buyer's packet and include key information such as an overview of the home-buying process, financing information, key points of contact and a clear outline of next steps to demonstrate your value.



## Showcase your value

When first meeting your buyer, spend more time learning about what's important to them so you can provide informed and personalized guidance. At the appointment, be the local expert. Understand what the buyer is looking for in a community and share local insight about the area.



## Facilitate the tour

When entering the home, point out any features that meet the buyer's ideal criteria. Also, allow them space to explore. Meet back in a quiet area or outside to discuss the buyer's likes and dislikes about the home to better understand what they're looking for.



## Establish next steps

Following the first appointment, ask the buyer to be their agent. Introduce them to the My Agent tool to enable seamless communication and see additional homes the buyer might be interested in touring. Secure the connection by sending an invitation or link to your Zillow profile. Determine if the buyer would like to submit an offer on the home, or set a date and time for the next appointment.

**Note:** When setting a listing appointment with a new seller, Premier Agent Advisory Board members recommend following similar steps to prepare. The primary objectives of a listing appointment are to meet and build rapport with the seller, tour the home, understand the seller's motivations and timeline, and sign the listing agreement.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

For additional touring best practices, register for a live session of the instructor-led course **“Winning Business in the Touring Phase”** through Zillow Academy.

### AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON SAFETY:

Take the same precautions with tour connections as you do when meeting anyone new. Once you've connected with the customer, plan your tour the same way you would for any other real estate lead. For example, you could suggest meeting at a public location like a coffee shop before continuing on to the property.



## How to approach financing

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The first or second touring appointment can be a natural time to discuss financing. When bringing up financing, ease into the conversation and make the topic approachable for all buyers. Top-performing partners recommend using open-ended questions like, “Do you have a plan for financing?” or “Would you be paying cash for the home, or would you like a recommendation for a lender?” This can also be an opportunity to provide an overview of the process, and explain any terms the buyer doesn’t understand.

The first appointment is also a great time to initiate communication between the buyer and lender, particularly if they’re ready to move in the next 3-6 months or they want to make an offer. This may be a group text or call to the lender for introductions and initial discussions. If the lender and buyer don’t connect live at the appointment, follow up with both of them the next day to make sure they’re connected.

Financing plays a critical role in the homebuyer’s experience. Zillow Home Loans is our solution to a more seamless financing process that can help you deliver the best customer experience. As a reliable, full-service lender, Zillow Home Loans has a 99% close-on-time rate and can help your client close in as quickly as 21 days. Zillow Home Loans supports loan types including conventional conforming, fixed and adjustable rates, jumbo/nonconforming, fixed rates, VA, FHA and 2-1 buydown. [Learn more about financing with Zillow Home Loans.](#)



# Navigating the offer process

The offer stage can often be emotional, frustrating and overwhelming for buyers. By leading with a customer-first mindset, you can help them feel empowered and supported through a complex process.

## Set expectations early

Early in the buyer's journey, top partners recommend setting expectations about the offer process and market conditions. This can help the buyer have a more realistic mindset.

- For first-time home buyers, this means providing an outline of the entire offer process. This can include key steps like writing the offer, offer acceptance or rejection, loan origination and the support you'll provide along the way.

Keep in mind that buyers may have done their own research or heard things about the market from family, friends or the media. This is your chance to address any misconceptions and demonstrate value through local knowledge and market data.

## Build the agent-to-agent relationship

Top partners agree that introducing yourself to the listing agent and establishing preferred communication is a helpful first step in the offer process. The listing agent may be able to provide additional home details for the buyer, or more context on the seller's offer preferences. An industry best practice is to ask the listing agent for insight into the submitted offers, and what's necessary for the offer to be considered by the seller. Here are some example questions you could ask:

- *"What would make the offer as attractive as possible to your seller?"*
- *"Other than price, what's important to your seller?"*
- *"Are there any specific terms your sellers are looking for (such as quick close, rent back, as is)?"*

## Facilitate communication between the buyer and lender

It's important that the buyer, lender and agent maintain frequent contact so the purchase stays on schedule. Be in touch with your client's loan officer regularly — especially through the negotiation, inspection and appraisal period when the structure of the deal can change. If your client is a first-time home buyer, it's even more important to keep in touch with the lender and make sure your client understands requests and deadlines.



## Strategize the offer components

Once the buyer is ready to submit an offer, strategize any contingencies and closing timeline with the buyer. Before submitting, review the completed offer with the buyer.

## Submit the offer

Once completed and reviewed with the buyer, package the offer in one well-organized document that's easy for the listing agent to read. Use the listing agent's preferred method of communication to notify them that the offer has been submitted.

- When the buyer has started submitting offers, be sure to move them to the **Submitting Offers** status in the Zillow Premier Agent app.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Learn more about navigating offers in the 13-minute course **[“Partner-Led Learning: Coaching Your Clients through the Offer Process.”](#)** You can also register for a live session of the instructor-led course **[“Navigating Buyers through the Offers Stage”](#)** on Zillow Academy.

# Zillow Premier Agent app

The Zillow Premier Agent app has the tools you need to manage a healthy pipeline — plus, it gives you access to exclusive features designed to maximize your connections and help you close more business.

Keeping your contacts updated in a customer relationship management tool (CRM) is a great way to build a strong book of business. **The Best of Zillow performance target for CRM usage is at least 5 updates per connection over 6 months.** Choose from a variety of ways to update your connections within the app, like sending a text message or email, making a status update, adjusting a timeframe to move, or adding a note, transaction or Dotloop.<sup>2</sup>

## Logging your Zillow transactions

**For Best of Zillow, the target conversion rate is 1.25x greater than your zip code average.** You can find your exact target in your Best of Zillow Report. When a transaction is closed from a Zillow connection, we recommend logging it on the **Contact Details** page. Partners are required to do this to be eligible for Flex and Best of Zillow.

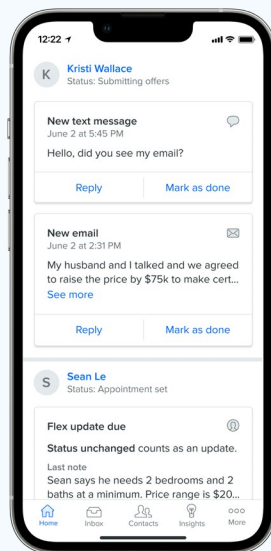
### To log a transaction on the desktop or mobile app:

- 1 Navigate to the **Contact Details** page
- 2 Update the contact status to **Sale Closed**
- 3 Go to the **Transaction** tab and add transaction details including address, close date and price.
- 4 Then select **Closed** for the transaction status (Flex partners are also required to add commission details).
- 5 Select **Save** on desktop or **Done** on mobile app

<sup>2</sup> Dotloop updates only available for Market Based Pricing partners.

## Tasks keep you on track

Manage tasks in the Zillow Premier Agent app by selecting **More** on your navigation toolbar then selecting **Tasks**. Review any upcoming and overdue tasks and determine if you need to make changes or take action with a lead. Set up reminders (available on desktop only) to notify you to follow up with a buyer.



## My Agent keeps you connected

Once you've successfully completed a connection call, an automatic and temporary My Agent relationship is created between you and the customer. My Agent — available exclusively through the Zillow Premier Agent app — helps you stay top of mind, gives you more visibility and unlocks detailed buyer and seller information so you can provide a personalized experience. With My Agent, you'll be able to:

**Be where customers are:** Zillow is the largest online real estate network in the United States.<sup>3</sup> With My Agent, you'll appear as the only buyer's agent on property listings your connections view.

**Seamlessly communicate:** Your connections can contact you directly from listings they love or want to tour.

**Receive exclusive placement:** Appear as your connection's agent on home-search emails they receive from Zillow.

Using the Zillow Premier Agent app to follow up with connections won't only help you stay in touch; it will help you maintain your My Agent relationships.

<sup>3</sup> Comscore Media Matrix® Multi-Platform, Real Estate, Total Audience, July 2023, U.S.

# Integrating your CRM

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Manage your contacts efficiently with app integrations. App integrations deliver leads from the Zillow Premier Agent app to your third-party CRM.

## Overview of app integrations

One-way integrations push new lead info to your third-party CRM. Any updates made to the contacts (notes, status changes, etc.) in the Premier Agent app will not be sent to the third-party CRM. Two-way integration allows updates made in either system to flow back and forth, keeping both systems up to date.

**Note:** For teams, the process needs to be completed for both the team lead and team members who are being assigned Zillow contacts. This ensures that contacts assigned to team members through routing are assigned properly once they hit your CRM.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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For more information, check out the 12-minute on-demand course [“Zillow Premier Agent App Basics”](#) or register for a session of Zillow’s live instructor-led course [“Premier Agent App Essentials”](#) on Zillow Academy.



# Routing leads to your team

One of the keys to successfully converting active customers is to set up routing rules in a way that maximizes zip code coverage and agent capacity.

**Through our research, we learned that top teams organize their routing rules with the following tenets in mind:**

## **Connections are routed directly to buyer agents**

To reduce friction in the customer experience, top teams route connection calls directly to the buyer agents with whom they would be working. This helps to build rapport between agents and their clients, and gives customers one main point of contact for their home-buying journey.

## **Optimized lead routing connects the right leads to the right agents**

You can use routing rules to assign connections to the agent who works the appropriate ZIP and price point. Using Zillow Premier Agent routing rules can also help you avoid the technical challenges associated with third-party routing systems.

### **A TIP FOR TEAM LEADERS:**

Try managing each agent's capacity using the pause functionality in Zillow Premier Agent routing rules. This way, you stop sending connections to agents who have already received the maximum number they can convert in a given time period.



# Keep learning, keep growing

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We hope this playbook inspires you to lead with a customer-first mindset at every stage of the home-buying process. Following these principles can help you achieve Best of Zillow status, and win more business — so that together, we can help more customers unlock life's next chapter.

To discover more best practices and strategies for conversion, or to learn more about Zillow Premier Agent tools, check out award-winning learning programs on Zillow Academy.

Zillow Academy has more than 50 on-demand and live instructor-led courses. Courses combine learnings from top-performing agents with data-driven insights from Zillow — helping you provide an exceptional customer experience and strengthen your business.

**As of July 2023, partners who have completed at least one course on Zillow Academy have, on average:**



- 52% higher conversion rate
- 33% higher ALM Appointment rate
- 15% higher work with rate (WWR)
- 14% higher answer rate

Scan the QR code to [register](#) for a course today!

 **Zillow PREMIER AGENT™**