MilitaryHomeSearch.com is the backbone of a thriving real estate firm in Colorado Springs, led by Lauren Schneider. Less than two years after the site and corresponding company’s launch, Lauren and her team of seven dominated 2017 with 213 completed transactions and a total sales volume of $52,917,165.

MilitaryHomeSearch.com specializes in military relocations, directly serving veterans and active-duty personnel who are assigned to any one of the 5 bases in the Colorado Springs region. While we could focus on the unique opportunities provided by niche specialization, there's a bigger lesson in Lauren's story: how blending online tools with offline relationships can be an extraordinarily effective real estate strategy.

In fact, Lauren’s team completed 213 transactions out of 2606 total leads, which works out to a lead to client conversion rate of 8.17%. Compare this to the average lead conversion rate of approximately 1% and it becomes apparent that MilitaryHomeSearch.com has fostered extraordinary results.

In this case study, we will demonstrate how a customer-focused attitude can be complemented by modern technology to build the genuine relationships that lead to a highly successful real estate website and business.

**An introduction to MilitaryHomeSearch.com**
The origins of MilitaryHomeSearch.com

Grant Schneider, Lauren's husband, is a mortgage lender and he recognized the opportunity to focus on an underserved military niche. After years of working with veterans, Grant had a unique perspective. He understood the questions, worries, and priorities that came from veterans, and recognized they often weren't the same as those from a traditional buyer.

"My husband has eleven years' experience as a lender. He focuses on VA loans, so basically the concept was his idea. He said, 'I know all the questions that VA buyers have been asking me for years. Wouldn't it be a great opportunity for you to create this website that answers all these questions, and for you to really take on that business', said Lauren. "He just saw the need for it."

Lauren Schneider uses an online strategy that utilizes the customized MilitaryHomeSearch.com website, an SEO campaign, and PPC campaigns with Real Estate Webmasters. Offline, Lauren employs a variety of relationship building techniques, including networking and event sponsorships.

**Developing people-focused technology**

Lauren started MilitaryHomeSearch.com with one priority, and it remains her focus to this day:

"The goal behind the site is to build this tool that's so needed in the Colorado Springs community. Basically the 'catch all' home search for the military buyer: anyone who is using a VA loan, whether they're active duty, whether they're recently retired and working on their second career now. Just being the ultimate resource and creating the ultimate user experience for our veterans is the goal."

Lauren's approach to her website is pragmatic yet passionate and she has developed MilitaryHomeSearch.com to help her clients find their next homes as quickly and efficiently as possible. Every aspect of the site, from the layout to the customized tools, has been part of her mission to develop the ultimate user experience.

To me, [the REW platform] is incredible because I know what my clients or my future clients are thinking before they know. I know what listings they're looking at. I can see if they're in Hawaii and if I shouldn't contact them for another four hours because they're four hours behind me. I know exactly the price point they're looking in before I get them on the phone. It just tells you everything about your user, and my whole team can use that," explained Lauren.
Military families are unique. Consider that many military personnel move from across the country and often receive their next orders while they're working full time. It's not always possible to visit Colorado Springs before moving day and, even if they do, time is precious.

“When they receive their orders, they're either going to have to take time off work or wait until they actually report here. Then they have to be okay living in a hotel for approximately thirty days while their home closes. If they're not able to make a trip or if they're not okay living in temporary housing, then they're going to do the whole process remotely with us.”

MilitaryHomeSearch.com addresses these needs by expediting the home buying process through a set of tools that uniquely serve Lauren’s community.

When a new user registers on the site, they are asked a few extra questions that relate specifically to military personnel, including: Affiliation (branch), Rank, and Duty Station. This information is then used throughout MilitaryHomeSearch.com to create a superior user experience.

BAH Tool

Military personnel receive a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) that sets their family’s housing budget. This allowance varies by rank and location. When looking for real estate, most families want to stay within their BAH allowance.

Lauren developed a custom tool that automatically indicates whether a prospective home falls within a buyer’s BAH, using the information gathered in the buyer’s profile.

“[The BAH tool] is what our users really love about our website. If you’re active duty, the military gives you money just to use towards housing. When they register on our website and they enter their rank and dependent status, our website automatically saves that information. On every listing they click on, it tells them what their housing allowance is and then it compares it to what an accurate VA mortgage payment is for that property. If it is within their housing allowance, the number is green. If it’s over their housing allowance, it turns red, and it’s super, super accurate.”

By understanding the specific needs and questions of her community, Lauren was able to create a piece of real estate technology that helps her buyers and draws people into her company.

Distance To Base Calculator

Borrowing from the assigned base information provided during registration, MilitaryHomeSearch.com has been customized with a “distance to base calculator” that will help personnel determine their daily commute times.

“We have five bases in Colorado Springs and when a person registers, they’ll enter their duty station. The distance to base calculator will calculate, with a map on every listing, the distance from the base to their location, which is really important.”

This tool allows Lauren’s clients to quickly and seamlessly determine whether a home offers a reasonable commute time without having to do any extra work.
The proven success of this user-centric strategy

Lauren’s passion for her clients and community is apparent, but it’s the resounding success of her user-centric strategy that demonstrates the true power of online relationship building.

MilitaryHomeSearch.com’s leads and closed transactions are consistently improving over time.

In 2016, the year MilitaryHomeSearch.com launched, Lauren’s strategy resulted in 98 closed transactions. In 2017, Lauren’s team completed 213 transactions at a sales volume exceeding $52 Million.

Likewise, the team itself has grown tremendously. Consider that MilitaryHomeSearch.com started with a single agent, and has grown in under 2 years to include 5 agents, a transaction coordinator, and a client care specialist.

This rapid growth on all fronts is a positive symptom of Lauren’s strategic use of the MilitaryHomeSearch.com website, search engine marketing, systematic lead conversion, and relationship building techniques.
Lessons to be learned

The key to success for MilitaryHomeSearch.com wasn’t just finding an underserved niche, but in developing an experience that genuinely benefits her ideal clients. Lauren has identified and invested in a website, custom tools, search engine marketing, processes, and a team that effectively address pain points specific to her community.

“My team is an important part of the process, but the website gives such major props. Everything we offer is on our website. It’s our whole business,” said Lauren.

“I love what REW has done for my business and there is no one else that could have been a better technology partner and that continues to be a great business partner.”

Right from the beginning, Lauren recognized REW as the one industry partner who could help take her business where she wanted it to go.

“I thought, ‘here’s the great solution, let’s see who their competitors are and let’s see if there’s a better solution out there’... There just isn’t,” said Lauren.

As a result of Lauren’s website strategy and hard-work, MilitaryHomeSearch.com resulted in 213 transactions and a sales volume of $52,917,165 in 2017, less than two years after the business and website first launched. Lauren Schneider has demonstrated how technology can be used to amplify a strong business strategy, by addressing the unique needs of a community.

Real Estate Webmasters is pleased to collaborate with agents like Lauren in developing a tailored online brand experience. Our team can offer advice, ideas and online marketing strategies, in addition to building features that can address your market’s specific needs.

“I love what REW has done for my business and there is no one else that could have been a better technology partner and that continues to be a great business partner.”