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An Analytical Study of Digital Marketing Strategies for Lead Generation in the Real Estate Sector

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Abstract

Digital marketing has become an important part of how real estate developers, brokers, property portals and commercial property firms communicate with prospective customers. This paper examines digital marketing strategies for lead generation across the Indian real estate sector, including residential, commercial, retail, industrial and other property segments. It uses a secondary-data approach, drawing on academic literature, official policy material and industry publications. The analysis considers search engine optimisation, paid search, social media, content marketing, video and virtual tours, property portals, websites, customer relationship management (CRM) and lead nurturing. It distinguishes lead volume from lead quality and final business conversion, because an enquiry alone does not establish purchase readiness or revenue. The study also considers the role of trust, perceived usefulness, accurate information, user experience, privacy and regulatory transparency. Recent Indian research on residential property buying intention suggests that digital marketing can influence perceived usefulness and buying intention, while the individual effects of channels may differ. However, that evidence is not automatically generalisable to all property segments or to lead-generation outcomes. As a secondary study, this paper does not generate original campaign-performance statistics or claim a universal best-performing channel. Instead, it develops a comparative framework and practical recommendations for measurement, channel selection, qualification and follow-up. The paper concludes that an integrated, evidence-led approach is more defensible than selecting channels on the basis of reach or enquiry volume alone.

Keywords: digital marketing, lead generation, real estate, India, search engine marketing, social media marketing, lead quality, customer relationship management

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The real estate sector includes activities related to the development, sale, purchase, leasing and management of land and built property. In India, the sector spans residential housing, offices, retail property, industrial and logistics facilities, hospitality assets and other specialised uses. These segments differ in their target audiences, purchase cycles, decision-makers, ticket sizes and information requirements. A household searching for an apartment, a retailer looking for a shop and a business searching for office space do not necessarily respond to the same messages or digital channels.

The sector is economically significant and is shaped by urbanisation, household formation, infrastructure development, investment flows and changing consumer expectations. The India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2026) reports that the Indian real estate market was valued at an estimated US$650 billion in 2025 and presents a long-term projection of US$5.8 trillion by 2047. These are industry estimates and projections, not measures of digital marketing performance. They nevertheless indicate the scale and diversity of the market in which property marketers operate.

Digital marketing refers to the use of digital channels and technologies to communicate value, attract audiences, support evaluation and maintain customer relationships. For real estate organisations, these channels may include search engines, paid advertisements, social networks, email, messaging platforms, websites, property portals, online video and virtual property experiences. Digital channels can help prospective customers discover projects, compare locations, review amenities, request information and arrange site visits. At the same time, the high financial commitment and



perceived risk associated with many property decisions mean that an enquiry may require substantial follow-up before it becomes a qualified opportunity.

1.2 Lead Generation in Real Estate

Lead generation is the process of attracting and identifying people or organisations that express interest in a product, service or property offering. In real estate, an enquiry may arrive through a website form, telephone call, property portal, social media message, advertisement, email or event registration. The enquiry becomes more commercially useful when the organisation can establish that the prospect is genuine, has a relevant requirement and is potentially able to proceed within a meaningful time frame.

Lead generation should therefore be considered a sequence rather than a single action. Exposure may create awareness; useful information may encourage engagement; an enquiry may indicate interest; qualification can establish fit; and timely follow-up can help move the prospect toward a site visit, meeting, booking or transaction. Not every person follows this sequence, and some customers may use several channels before contacting a provider. A sound analysis should avoid treating all leads as equivalent.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Real estate marketers face a practical allocation problem: they must decide how to distribute limited budgets and staff time across channels while maintaining accurate communication and responding to prospects. A campaign that generates many inexpensive enquiries may still be inefficient if the enquiries are duplicated, outside the target geography, unresponsive or poorly matched to the property. Conversely, a channel that produces fewer enquiries may provide prospects with stronger purchase intent. This makes lead quality, qualification, follow-up and conversion important alongside reach and cost.

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 provides a statutory framework intended to promote transparency and protect consumers in real estate transactions (Government of India, 2016). In marketing practice, this reinforces the importance of accurate project information, responsible claims and clear communication. Digital platforms can increase visibility, but they can also spread misleading or outdated details quickly. Ethical marketing and regulatory compliance are therefore relevant to lead generation, not separate from it.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study considers the Indian real estate sector as a whole rather than restricting itself to residential property. Residential real estate is included because it is an important context for consumer-facing property marketing and because some recent research directly examines Indian home buyers. Commercial offices, retail, industrial and logistics properties, hospitality and other segments are also considered conceptually. Where a source studies only residential property or a specific region, its findings are identified as context-specific and are not presented as universal evidence.

The paper focuses on digital strategies for acquiring and developing leads. It does not estimate the actual return on investment of a particular company or campaign, because no original campaign dataset has been supplied. Its conclusions are based on the secondary sources reviewed and on transparent analytical reasoning.

2. Statement of the Problem

Real estate organisations can use a growing range of digital channels to attract prospects, but the availability of multiple channels does not by itself establish which strategy is most effective. Performance may vary according to the property segment, location, target audience, project stage, campaign objective, budget, creative quality, landing-page experience, lead-response process and definition of a qualified lead. Comparisons are especially difficult when companies report different metrics or use the word “lead” to describe different levels of customer readiness.

A second problem is the tendency to evaluate campaigns using visible top-of-funnel metrics, such as impressions, clicks, views or raw enquiries, without consistently connecting them to qualified leads, site visits, bookings or transactions. A third problem concerns trust: prospects may need to verify a developer, assess the reliability of project information, understand pricing and compare alternatives before sharing personal details or making a decision. The research problem is therefore to analyse how digital marketing strategies can contribute to lead generation and how performance should be assessed without assuming that one channel is universally superior.

3. Research Objectives

1. To examine the major digital marketing strategies used for lead generation in the Indian real estate sector.
2. To analyse the potential roles of SEO, paid search, social media, content marketing, property portals, websites and lead-management systems across the customer journey.



3. To identify the factors that influence lead quality and progression from enquiry to qualified opportunity.
4. To examine key challenges, including lead quality, acquisition cost, trust, data handling, attribution and follow-up.
5. To develop evidence-informed recommendations for measuring and improving digital lead-generation performance.

4. Research Questions

6. Which digital marketing channels are relevant to lead generation across different segments of Indian real estate?
7. How do search, social, content, portal and website strategies support different stages of the customer journey?
8. What factors influence whether a digital enquiry becomes a qualified lead?
9. Which metrics are useful for evaluating lead generation beyond raw enquiry volume?
10. What organisational, ethical and regulatory challenges affect digital lead generation in real estate?

5. Review of Literature

5.1 Digital Marketing and the Customer Journey

Digital marketing is best understood as a connected set of activities rather than a collection of isolated platforms. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022) discuss digital marketing in terms of strategy, channel integration, customer experience and measurement. This perspective is useful for real estate because prospects may discover a property through search, encounter a social media post later, revisit a website, compare listings on a portal and finally contact a sales representative by telephone or messaging.

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) explain that customer experience develops across multiple touchpoints and over time. Although their work is not limited to real estate, the customer-journey perspective is relevant to property decisions because information search and evaluation can extend over weeks or months. A single last-click report may fail to capture the role of earlier content or awareness activities. For this reason, a multi-touch perspective can help managers interpret channel contribution more cautiously.

5.2 Digital Marketing and Real Estate Buying Intention in India

Prasad et al. (2026) examined digital marketing and residential property buying intention in India's National Capital Region using survey data from 499 residential property buyers and structural equation modelling. The study conceptualised digital marketing through content marketing, social media marketing, search engine marketing, online advertising, and virtual tours and website experience. It reported that the overall digital-marketing construct positively influenced perceived usefulness, which in turn influenced buying intention. It also reported that trust in the developer partially mediated the relationship between digital marketing and buying intention.

The study is directly relevant to the Indian context, but its boundaries matter. Its sample concerns residential property buyers in the National Capital Region, and its outcome is buying intention rather than observed lead-generation cost, qualified-lead rate or completed transactions. The results should therefore inform discussion of perceived usefulness and trust, but should not be treated as proof that a specific channel produces the lowest cost per lead throughout India's entire real estate sector.

5.3 Trust and Consumer Risk

Trust is important in digital environments because a prospect may initially interact with a company without meeting its representatives or physically inspecting the property. Morgan and Hunt (1994) positioned trust and commitment as central concepts in relationship marketing. Applied cautiously to real estate, this perspective suggests that consistent information, credible responses and reliable follow-up can support a continuing relationship. However, trust should be built through verifiable facts and service quality, not simply through persuasive claims.

For high-involvement purchases, the usefulness of digital information may depend on whether it answers practical questions. Examples include location, connectivity, project status, floor plans, facilities, price components, availability, possession timelines and the identity of the developer or agent. In commercial real estate, relevant information may instead include floor area, lease terms, accessibility, infrastructure, operating costs and suitability for a business. Content that omits material information may attract attention without helping a prospect make a sound decision.

5.4 Search Engine Optimisation and Paid Search

Search engine optimisation (SEO) aims to improve the visibility and usefulness of a website in unpaid search results. Real estate SEO can involve location-specific landing pages, clear project descriptions, useful neighbourhood guides, structured property information, mobile performance, accessible navigation and technically sound pages. Search intent



varies: a broad query about buying property may reflect early exploration, whereas a query naming a locality, property type and budget may indicate a more specific requirement. Search terms alone do not prove readiness to buy.

Paid search advertising can help marketers reach people who are actively searching for relevant property information. It offers control over targeting, budgets, creative messages and landing pages, but performance depends on competition, query relevance, ad quality, geographic targeting and conversion tracking. Search advertising should be assessed through downstream indicators, not click-through rate alone. The cost per raw enquiry can be misleading if tracking does not distinguish duplicate, invalid or unqualified enquiries.

5.5 Social Media and Content Marketing

Social media can distribute project updates, property walkthroughs, location information, customer service messages and educational content. It can support awareness and conversation, and paid campaigns may allow targeting based on platform-defined audience attributes. Nevertheless, likes, shares and views are not equivalent to purchase intent. Marketers should assess whether social activity produces relevant visits, enquiries and qualified opportunities, while respecting platform policies and privacy requirements.

Content marketing focuses on producing useful and relevant material for an intended audience. Examples include buying guides, explainers on property documentation, neighbourhood comparisons, commercial-space checklists, construction progress updates and answers to frequently asked questions. Video, 360-degree views and virtual tours can help prospects understand a property's layout or location before visiting. Their value depends on accuracy, accessibility, production quality and whether the content answers the questions that matter to the intended audience.

5.6 Property Portals and Listing Platforms

Property portals aggregate listings and provide a search environment in which users can compare locations, prices, sizes and property features. They can be valuable where users already have a property-search objective. However, portal enquiries may be shared with multiple advertisers, and prospects may contact several providers at once. This can increase competition for attention and complicate attribution. Marketers should evaluate each portal using the cost of valid and qualified leads, duplication, response rates and subsequent outcomes where available.

5.7 Website Experience, CRM and Lead Nurturing

A website or landing page should make it easy for prospects to understand the offering and take the next appropriate action. Relevant elements include clear property information, mobile-friendly design, fast loading, contact options, accessible forms, transparent privacy information and calls to action that match the visitor's stage. Requiring too much information at the first contact may reduce submissions; requesting too little may make qualification difficult. The right balance depends on the audience, channel and follow-up process.

Customer relationship management (CRM) systems can centralise lead records, record source information, allocate enquiries, set reminders and document follow-up. A CRM does not automatically improve outcomes: its usefulness depends on data quality, adoption, clear responsibility and timely action. Lead nurturing may include relevant email or messaging follow-ups, appointment reminders, answers to questions and updates requested by the prospect. Communications should respect consent, opt-out preferences and applicable rules.

5.8 Literature Review Summary

The literature reviewed points toward a connected view of digital marketing. Channels can perform different functions, and the relationship between exposure and purchase is shaped by information usefulness, trust, user experience and follow-up. The available India-specific evidence is useful but limited in scope. It does not justify a universal ranking of channels across residential, commercial, retail, industrial and other real estate categories. This supports a comparative, secondary-data study that evaluates channels by role, evidence, limitations and appropriate performance measures.

6. Research Gap

The sources reviewed provide useful insights into digital marketing, customer journeys and residential buying intention, but several gaps remain relevant to the present study. First, some India-specific research focuses on residential buyers in a particular region rather than the full range of Indian real estate segments. Second, buying intention and perceived usefulness are not identical to observed lead quality, cost per qualified lead, site visits or completed transactions. Third, channel comparisons can be unreliable when studies use different samples, metrics, time periods and definitions.

This paper addresses these gaps at a conceptual and comparative level by examining the roles of multiple channels across the lead-generation journey, distinguishing raw enquiries from qualified leads and business outcomes, and identifying what evidence would be required for stronger performance comparisons. Because the study uses secondary data and does not collect a new dataset, it does not claim to fill the gaps with new empirical measurements.



7. Research Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical secondary-research design. It synthesises published academic literature, official legal and regulatory material, and industry reports to examine digital marketing strategies for lead generation in the Indian real estate sector. The analysis is comparative and interpretive; it does not test a new statistical model or estimate causal effects.

7.2 Data Sources

The proposed source base includes peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books on digital marketing and customer experience, official government legislation, publications from housing-sector institutions and industry reports from established organisations. The sources used in the initial draft include the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016; the National Housing Bank's housing reports; IBEF's real estate industry overview; and a 2026 empirical article on digital marketing and residential buying intention in India's National Capital Region.

7.3 Source Selection Criteria

Sources were considered relevant when they addressed one or more of the following: digital marketing strategy, real estate customer behaviour, lead generation, trust, customer journey, housing-market context, regulatory transparency or measurement. Preference was given to sources with identifiable authors or issuing organisations, clear publication details and a traceable publication record. Industry estimates were treated as context rather than independent proof of channel performance.

7.4 Method of Analysis

The analysis uses thematic comparison. Evidence is grouped into channel strategy, role in the customer journey, potential benefits, limitations, metrics and operational requirements. Where a study reports findings from a particular region or property segment, that boundary is retained. Where the available sources do not provide comparable numerical channel-performance data, the paper uses qualitative comparison instead of constructing artificial rankings or averages.

7.5 Ethical Considerations

The paper relies on published secondary sources and does not involve new human participants. It aims to attribute ideas and evidence to their original sources, distinguish sourced facts from the author's analysis, and avoid fabricated data. Any future use of company-level or customer-level lead data should consider consent, privacy, access control, retention and applicable legal requirements. Real estate advertisements should also be reviewed for accuracy and compliance with relevant regulations.

7.6 Limitations of the Methodology

Secondary research depends on the availability and quality of existing publications. Studies may use different definitions, samples, time periods and outcome measures, limiting direct comparison. Some industry reports are commercially produced and may not disclose complete methods. The current paper does not have access to campaign-level data from developers, brokers or portals. It therefore cannot calculate actual cost per lead, conversion rates or return on marketing investment for the sector as a whole.

8. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework treats digital marketing channels as inputs that can create exposure and engagement. Engagement may lead to enquiries, but lead quality and subsequent outcomes are influenced by relevance, trust, perceived usefulness, affordability or commercial fit, timing and follow-up. The framework is proposed for organising the literature; it is not a statistically tested model in this study.

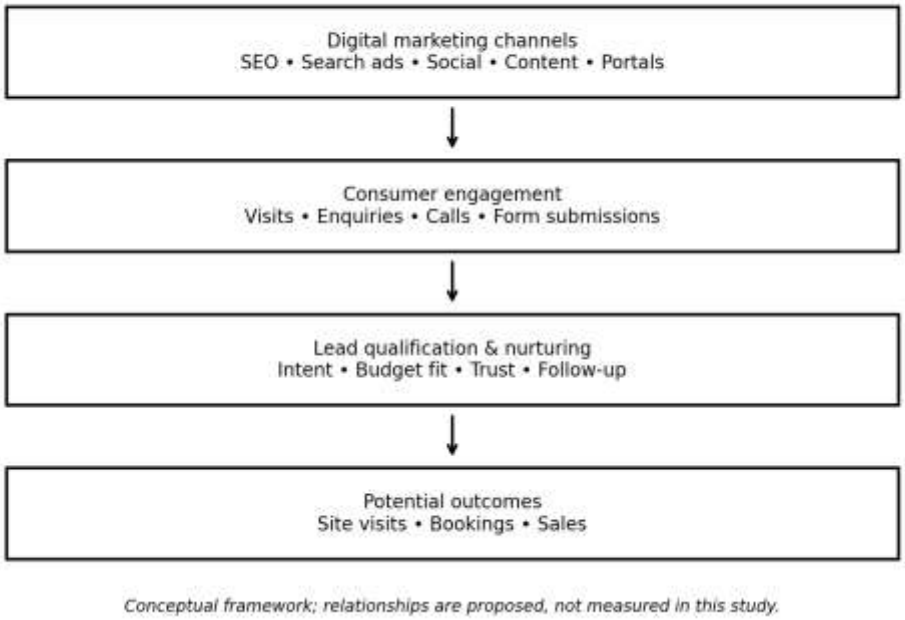


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of digital marketing and real estate lead generation.

8.1 Explanation of the Framework

The first stage contains digital channels through which prospects may encounter a property or service. The second stage captures actions such as visiting a website, viewing a listing, calling, messaging or submitting a form. The third stage involves assessing fit and nurturing the relationship through useful information and follow-up. The final stage represents possible business outcomes, including site visits, bookings, leases or sales. A prospect may enter at different points, move between channels or leave the process at any stage.

The framework also highlights the need for measurement across stages. Reach and clicks help describe exposure and engagement, while qualified-lead rate and cost per qualified lead provide information about lead quality. Site-visit, booking and transaction metrics help assess downstream progression. No single metric captures the full effectiveness of a campaign.

9. Comparative Analysis of Digital Marketing Strategies

9.1 Search Engine Optimisation

SEO is suited to building discoverability for people seeking property information, project details, location information or guidance. A useful SEO programme should prioritise accurate and specific pages rather than repeating generic keywords. For residential projects, this may include locality, connectivity, unit types, amenities and project status. For commercial property, content may cover office availability, industrial specifications, leasing information or retail location characteristics. The objective is not merely to attract traffic but to attract visitors whose needs are relevant to the offering.

SEO requires time and ongoing maintenance. Rankings can change, competitors can improve their content and search platforms can modify their systems. Organic traffic may also contain visitors who are researching rather than ready to enquire. Appropriate measures include qualified organic sessions, enquiry conversion rate, lead quality, organic-assisted conversions and the performance of relevant landing pages. Attribution should be interpreted carefully because users may return through another channel before making contact.

9.2 Paid Search and Online Advertising

Paid search is often useful when prospects actively express a need through search queries. Display and social advertising may support awareness or re-engagement, depending on platform policies and consent settings. Effective campaign design begins with segment-specific objectives, a clear proposition, geographic and audience relevance, accurate claims and a landing page that continues the promise made in the advertisement.

The main risk is optimising toward the easiest action to measure rather than the outcome the business values. If a platform is optimised for inexpensive form submissions, it may deliver volume without adequate fit. Marketers should



feed reliable downstream information back into campaign evaluation where technically and legally appropriate. Cost per qualified lead, appointment rate and conversion by source are more informative than raw lead count alone, although they require consistent definitions and sufficient observation time.

9.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media can help property businesses explain project features, show progress, answer common questions and distribute short-form video or visual content. It can also support direct enquiries and customer service. Different platforms may reach different audiences, but platform popularity alone does not establish effectiveness for a particular property. The audience's location, purchasing role, budget, business need and stage in the decision process should shape content and targeting.

A responsible social strategy should use authentic imagery, clear labels and accurate claims. Renderings should not be confused with completed properties, and testimonials should not be fabricated. Metrics can include relevant reach, engaged visits, enquiry rate, qualified-lead rate and the proportion of social enquiries that progress to a meaningful next step. Vanity metrics should be treated as diagnostic rather than final outcomes.

9.4 Content, Video and Virtual Experiences

Content can reduce uncertainty by explaining complex details in a format that prospective customers can revisit and share. Examples include neighbourhood guides, project FAQs, floor-plan explainers, checklists for evaluating property, commercial leasing guides and explanations of documentation. Video and virtual tours can help viewers understand layout and spatial relationships before a physical visit, but they cannot replace all forms of inspection or due diligence.

Content performance should be evaluated in relation to its intended purpose. An educational article may support early-stage discovery, while a detailed project brochure may assist later-stage comparison. Relevant measures include engaged time, repeat visits, downloads, assisted enquiries and questions answered during the sales process. Such measures should not be interpreted as proof of sales impact unless linked to reliable downstream evidence.

9.5 Property Portals and Aggregators

Property portals provide search, comparison and enquiry functionality. They can offer access to an audience already looking for property, but listings may compete directly with alternatives and enquiries may be sent to several providers. Listing completeness, photography quality, response speed and consistency between listing details and actual availability can influence the experience.

Portal performance should be reviewed by property segment and source. A practical review may examine valid enquiries, duplicates, contactability, qualified-lead rate, appointment rate, cost per qualified lead and subsequent outcomes. If portal leads are counted differently from website or social leads, a comparison of headline volumes will be unreliable.

9.6 Website and Landing-Page Optimisation

A website is both an information source and a conversion environment. It should support users who are exploring as well as those ready to enquire. Useful features include clear navigation, readable property information, mobile compatibility, accessible contact details, transparent pricing information where available, relevant images and appropriately designed enquiry forms. The page should not promise information that it does not provide.

Conversion-rate optimisation involves testing changes systematically rather than relying only on opinion. Possible tests include form length, calls to action, page layout, contact options and the order in which information appears. Results should be interpreted using adequate data and attention to differences in traffic sources. A change that increases form submissions may also alter lead quality, so both volume and quality should be monitored.

9.7 Email, Messaging and Lead Nurturing

Email and messaging can maintain contact with prospects who have requested information or agreed to receive updates. Examples include sharing a brochure, confirming an appointment, answering a specific question, providing an availability update or reminding a prospect of a scheduled site visit. Communication should be relevant, proportionate and respectful of preferences. Repeated unsolicited messages may damage trust and create compliance risk.

Lead nurturing is most useful when it reflects the prospect's stated requirements and stage in the decision process. A CRM can record what was requested, the source of the lead, the date of contact, the next action and the outcome. Standardised stages improve reporting, but staff must use them consistently. A lead marked “qualified” should meet a documented definition rather than an individual's intuition.

9.8 CRM, Automation and Analytics

CRM and analytics tools can connect marketing activity to operational follow-up. At a minimum, records should distinguish source, campaign, date, contactability, property requirement, qualification status, assigned owner and next



action. Automation can route leads, send confirmations or create reminders, but automated messages should not replace appropriate human responses to complex questions.

Analytics should be designed around decisions. If a campaign has high click volume but few relevant enquiries, the team should review intent, creative and landing-page fit. If qualified leads are plentiful but site visits are low, the problem may lie in response time, scheduling, price fit or the follow-up process. If site visits occur but transactions do not, further diagnosis is needed rather than automatically blaming the acquisition channel.

10. Comparative Channel Matrix

Table 1 summarises the strategic roles of common digital channels. It is a qualitative comparison developed for this paper, not a ranking based on measured sector-wide performance.

Table 1

Channel	Typical role	Potential strengths	Limitations / risks	Useful measures
SEO	Discovery and information search	Can build durable visibility for relevant queries	Slow to develop; traffic may be exploratory	Qualified organic sessions; enquiry rate; assisted conversions
Paid search	Capture active search demand	Targeting and budget controls; intent-related queries	Auction costs; poor query fit; tracking gaps	Cost per qualified lead; appointment rate; conversion by keyword
Social media	Awareness, engagement and enquiry	Visual storytelling; interaction; audience targeting	Engagement may not signal buying intent	Qualified enquiries; relevant visits; downstream progression
Content/video/virtual tours	Education and evaluation	Explains features; supports remote evaluation	Production cost; content may become outdated	Downloads; engaged visits; assisted enquiries
Property portals	Listing discovery and comparison	Access to users actively browsing listings	Competition; duplicate/shared enquiries	Valid leads; qualified-lead rate; cost per qualified lead
Website/landing pages	Information and conversion	Owned environment; can test user experience	Poor usability or unclear details may reduce conversion	Form completion; call conversion; qualified-lead rate
Email/messaging	Nurturing and follow-up	Direct, contextual communication	Consent, fatigue and deliverability issues	Response rate; appointment attendance; opt-out rate
CRM and analytics	Lead handling and measurement	Ownership, reminders and stage tracking	Poor adoption or incomplete data	Response time; stage conversion; duplicate rate

11. Lead Qualification and Performance Measurement

11.1 Why Lead Quality Matters

A lead-generation system should separate the number of enquiries from their relevance and progression. For example, a campaign may attract people outside the project's service area or individuals whose budget and requirements do not match the offering. These enquiries may still be valid expressions of interest, but they should not be treated as equivalent to a prospect who has confirmed a relevant requirement and agreed to a next step.

Qualification criteria should be adapted to the segment. Residential criteria may include preferred location, property type, approximate budget, intended use and purchase timeline. Commercial criteria may include required area, location,



lease or purchase preference, operational requirements and decision-making authority. Criteria should be collected respectfully and only to the extent needed for the business purpose.

11.2 Core Metrics and Definitions

Table 2

Metric	Definition / formula	Interpretation caution
Click-through rate (CTR)	Clicks ÷ impressions × 100	Shows response to an ad, not lead quality
Landing-page conversion rate	Tracked conversions ÷ landing-page sessions × 100	Define conversion consistently; may include low-intent actions
Cost per lead (CPL)	Campaign cost ÷ number of leads	Depends on how a lead is defined and deduplicated
Qualified-lead rate	Qualified leads ÷ valid leads × 100	Requires a consistent qualification standard
Cost per qualified lead (CPQL)	Campaign cost ÷ qualified leads	Compare only with consistent costs and qualification rules
Lead-to-appointment rate	Appointments booked ÷ valid leads × 100	May be affected by contactability and scheduling
Appointment attendance rate	Appointments attended ÷ appointments booked × 100	Record cancellations and rescheduling consistently
Lead-to-sale conversion	Completed transactions ÷ defined lead cohort × 100	Requires a sufficiently long observation window
Return on marketing investment (ROMI)	Incremental contribution attributable to marketing ÷ marketing cost	Attribution and incremental contribution must be defined

11.3 Attribution and Comparability

Attribution assigns credit for a conversion to one or more marketing touchpoints. A first-touch model highlights the channel that introduced a prospect; a last-touch model highlights the final recorded interaction before conversion; multi-touch models distribute credit across selected interactions. Each approach has limitations. The final click may not have created initial interest, while a first-touch model may ignore later activities that helped a prospect decide.

For reliable comparisons, organisations should define the reporting period, campaign costs, valid lead criteria, duplicate-handling rules, qualification stages and conversion window. They should also separate residential, commercial and other segments where their buying processes differ. Without this consistency, a numerical channel comparison may appear precise while comparing unlike outcomes.

12. Challenges in Digital Lead Generation

12.1 Low-Quality and Duplicate Leads

Lead quality can be affected by broad targeting, unclear advertisements, weak forms, accidental submissions, duplicate records and multiple providers contacting the same prospect. These problems can waste staff time and distort campaign reports. The response should include clearer campaign promises, validation rules, source-level monitoring and feedback from the team that contacts leads.

12.2 Trust and Information Accuracy

Property decisions depend on reliable information. Inconsistent prices, outdated availability, unclear project status, exaggerated amenities or images that do not reflect the offering can damage trust. The RERA framework makes transparency and consumer protection central policy concerns in real estate (Government of India, 2016). Marketing teams should coordinate with project, legal and sales teams to verify claims before publication and to update information when circumstances change.

12.3 Cost and Competitive Pressure

Paid media and portal placements may be competitive in popular locations and property categories. Rising acquisition costs can encourage organisations to optimise for cheap enquiries rather than valuable prospects. A better response is to evaluate cost alongside lead quality and downstream progression, while testing different audience, creative and landing-page combinations within a defined budget.



12.4 Slow Sales Cycles and Attribution

A prospect may research a property for an extended period, return through multiple channels and complete a transaction well after the original campaign. Short reporting windows may undervalue early-stage activities. Conversely, assigning all revenue to the final interaction may overstate the contribution of a closing channel. Reporting should distinguish leading indicators from eventual business outcomes and acknowledge attribution uncertainty.

12.5 Privacy, Consent and Data Governance

Lead forms and CRM records may contain personal information. Organisations should provide clear notices, restrict access to legitimate business needs, maintain appropriate security, avoid unnecessary collection and honour communication preferences. Data practices should be reviewed against applicable Indian laws and rules, platform requirements and organisational policies. This paper does not provide legal advice; organisations should obtain appropriate guidance for specific compliance questions.

12.6 Capability and Process Gaps

Digital performance depends on more than advertising technology. Staff need clear responsibility for lead assignment, timely response, accurate CRM updates and escalation of questions. Marketing, sales, customer service and project teams should agree on definitions and feedback loops. Without process discipline, a technically sophisticated campaign can generate enquiries that are not handled consistently.

13. Recommendations

13.1 Use a segment-specific strategy

Develop separate messaging, landing pages and qualification criteria for residential, commercial, retail, industrial and other property categories. Avoid assuming that one audience or channel mix will fit all segments.

13.2 Establish a shared lead definition

Document what counts as an enquiry, a valid lead, a marketing-qualified lead and a sales-qualified lead. Apply the same definitions across channels and reporting periods.

13.3 Optimise for qualified outcomes

Track valid leads, qualified-lead rate, cost per qualified lead, appointments and downstream conversions alongside impressions and clicks. Do not treat inexpensive raw leads as automatic evidence of success.

13.4 Improve information usefulness and trust

Provide clear, current property details and useful educational content. Verify claims, identify illustrative renderings appropriately and make relevant regulatory or project information easy to locate.

13.5 Connect marketing to CRM follow-up

Assign ownership, establish service-level expectations for initial responses, record next actions and use standardised outcome codes. Review missed contacts and stalled leads regularly.

13.6 Measure the complete customer journey

Where feasible, use consistent source tagging and cohort reporting to understand how channels contribute at different stages. Be transparent about attribution limits and avoid double-counting conversions.

13.7 Test rather than assume

Run controlled or carefully documented tests of audience, creative, offer, landing-page structure and form design. Change one or a small number of variables where possible, and assess lead quality as well as conversion volume.

13.8 Maintain ethical and compliant communication

Obtain and respect appropriate permissions, provide clear privacy information, honour opt-outs, and keep advertising claims accurate. Review relevant RERA requirements and platform rules before campaign launch.

13.9 Build a regular performance review

Create a monthly channel review that covers spend, valid leads, qualified leads, cost per qualified lead, response time, appointments, conversion progression and key learnings. Use findings to reallocate budgets only when the evidence is sufficiently reliable.

14. Proposed Lead-Generation Funnel

Figure 3 presents a practical funnel for organising lead-generation measurement. It should be adapted to the organisation's actual customer journey; some prospects will skip stages, return to earlier stages or engage through offline interactions.

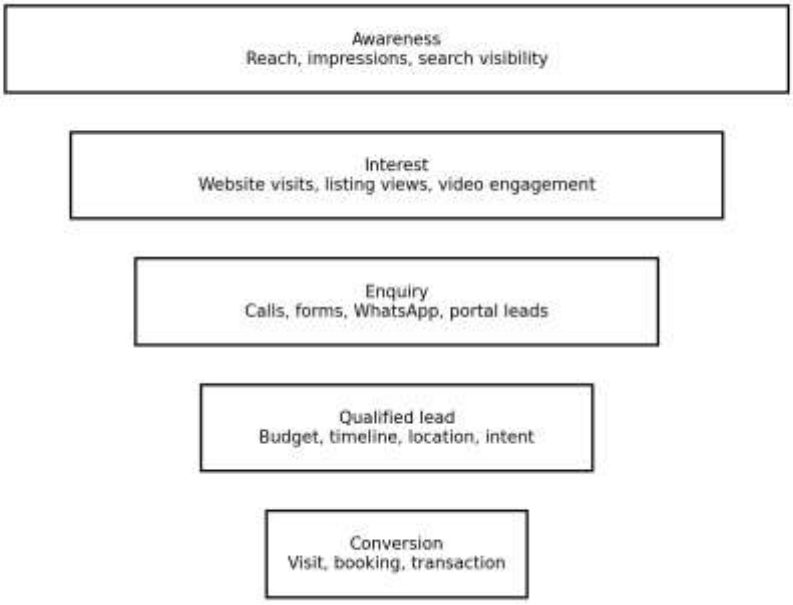


Figure 3. Illustrative real estate digital lead-generation funnel.

15. Proposed Secondary-Research Process

The research process below documents how the paper moves from questions to synthesis. For a formal submission, the author should retain a source log containing the search date, source title, author or issuing organisation, publication year, source type, relevant evidence, limitations and the section in which the source is used.

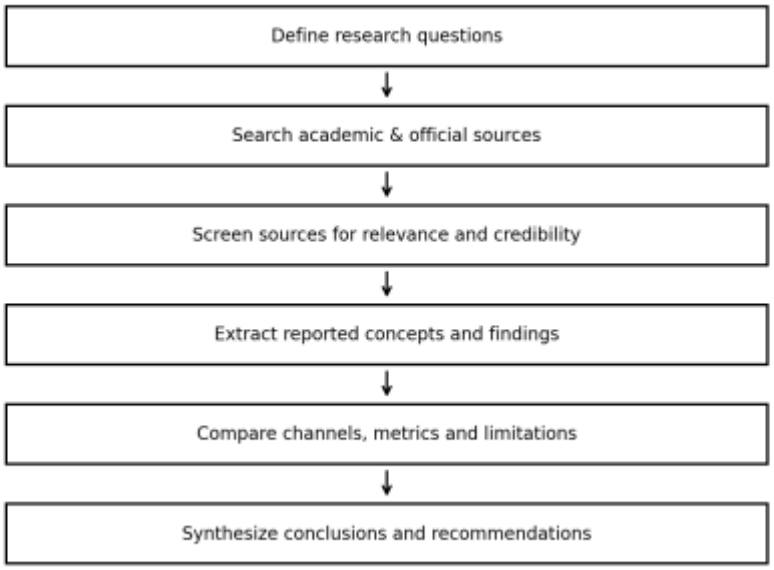


Figure 4. Secondary-data research process.

Table 3

Source category	Purpose in this paper	Limitations to consider
Peer-reviewed research	Understand reported relationships, theories and methods	Findings may be specific to a sample, region or property segment
Academic books	Provide concepts for digital strategy and customer journeys	General frameworks may not capture every real estate condition



Government legislation	Establish relevant legal and transparency context	Requires interpretation and may be supplemented by rules or state-level guidance
Housing-sector institutions	Describe housing and market context	Not necessarily focused on digital marketing or lead generation
Industry reports	Provide market estimates and sector developments	Methods, assumptions and commercial interests may vary
Company campaign data (not used here)	Would enable direct channel-performance analysis	Not available for this study; no campaign metrics are inferred

16. Discussion

The analysis suggests that the practical question is not simply which channel produces the most leads, but which combination of channels and processes attracts suitable prospects and supports their progression. SEO and paid search can address explicit information needs; social media and content can support awareness and explanation; portals can reach active property browsers; websites can help prospects evaluate and enquire; and CRM systems can support qualification and follow-up. These roles overlap, and the contribution of each channel depends on the context.

The India-specific study by Prasad et al. (2026) is relevant because it connects digital marketing with perceived usefulness and trust in a residential real estate setting. It supports the argument that digital communication should do more than attract attention: it should help prospects evaluate options and build confidence in the source of information. At the same time, its regional and residential focus means that it cannot establish a single best strategy for every real estate segment across India.

The comparison also indicates that measurement design is a managerial capability. When the same term is used differently across channels, cost-per-lead comparisons become unreliable. A common lead taxonomy, consistent source tracking and feedback from lead-handling teams can make evaluation more meaningful. Downstream measures should be interpreted over an appropriate time horizon because real estate decisions may not occur within the same reporting period as the first interaction.

Finally, the sector's high-value decisions make accurate communication and trust essential. Regulatory transparency, clear property information and respectful data practices can support a stronger customer experience. They are not substitutes for good targeting or campaign measurement; rather, they form part of the conditions under which digital lead generation can operate responsibly.

17. Conclusion

This paper examined digital marketing strategies for lead generation across the Indian real estate sector using a secondary-data approach. It considered SEO, paid search, social media, content and video marketing, virtual tours, property portals, website optimisation, email and messaging, CRM and analytics. The comparative analysis shows that these channels can serve different roles along the customer journey and should not be evaluated solely through exposure or raw enquiry volume.

The reviewed literature highlights the relevance of information usefulness, trust and user experience to property-related decision-making. Recent Indian residential research provides useful evidence on these relationships, but it does not justify universal channel rankings or direct conclusions about cost per lead and completed transactions across all real estate segments. Such conclusions would require comparable campaign-level data and consistent definitions.

The central managerial implication is to combine segment-specific channel selection with disciplined measurement and lead management. Organisations should define qualified leads, track cost and progression, ensure accurate project information, connect marketing with CRM follow-up, and use evidence to refine campaigns. A balanced strategy should seek relevant and trustworthy engagement rather than volume alone.

18. Limitations and Future Scope

The study is limited by its reliance on published secondary sources and the uneven availability of comparable performance data. It does not include interviews with developers or agencies, original consumer surveys, or company campaign records. It therefore cannot quantify average channel costs, determine a causal ranking of strategies or estimate sector-wide conversion rates.

Future research could compare multiple real estate organisations across cities and segments using a common definition of valid and qualified leads. A longitudinal dataset could link campaign spend and source to lead qualification, site



visits, bookings, leases or sales. Qualitative interviews could explore how marketing teams define lead quality and how prospects evaluate trust. Such work would help test whether the channel roles described in this paper translate into measurable outcomes in different market conditions.

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Appendix A: Suggested Source-Extraction Template

The following template can be used to document any additional sources consulted before submission. Complete each row only after reading the source itself.

Table 4

Field	What to record
Full reference	Author or organisation, year, title, journal/report, DOI or URL
Research question	What did the source investigate?
Context and sample	Country, region, property segment, participants or dataset
Method	Survey, interview, modelling, market report, legal analysis, etc.
Reported findings	Accurate summary of the source's findings, with page/table reference where possible
Limitations	Sample limits, measurement limits, date, potential bias or missing information
Use in this paper	Which objective, channel or argument does it support?

Appendix B: Suggested Lead-Management Definitions

Table 5

Stage	Suggested operational definition
Enquiry	A recorded request or expression of interest received through a tracked channel
Valid lead	An enquiry that is not identified as spam, a test submission or a duplicate under the organisation's rules
Qualified lead	A valid lead meeting documented criteria relevant to the property and target segment
Appointment / site visit	A scheduled meeting or visit, recorded separately from a qualified lead



Opportunity	A prospect with a documented requirement and an agreed next step, based on the organisation's process
Conversion	A defined business outcome such as booking, signed lease or completed transaction