



Virtual Real Estate Tour

Toll Free 1-866-947-8687 | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com

Virtual Real Estate Tour

When a potential home buyer can't get out right away to tour a listing, savvy real estate agents hold an open house on the potential buyer's computer screen called a virtual real estate tour.

A virtual real estate tour is not just a cool gimmick real estate agents use to show off their technological prowess. Consumers demand a virtual real estate tour. Seventy-eight percent of those who shop for homes on the Internet say the most important feature when searching online is quality photos -- followed closely by detailed property descriptions and a virtual real estate tour, according to the 2003 National Association of Realtors Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers.

What's more, those who demand a virtual real estate tour are more likely to be smarter, wealthier consumers in their prime home-buying years, compared to those who don't take a virtual real estate tour. On a typical day, more than 2 million people are using the Internet to go on a virtual real estate tour, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

Those virtual tours are not always a virtual real estate tour. They also take viewers to far off places on Earth and beyond, say, to Moon, and include vacation destinations, colleges, art exhibits, hotels, and notable homes like the White House and Taj Mahal.

Virtual real estate tours, however, are among some of the most common tours taken. Pew's nationwide phone survey to examine the impact of the Internet interviewed 914 adults, 534 of whom are savvy Internet users. The survey said those who take a virtual real estate tour were more often single, white, women, aged 28 to 49, earning \$50,000 a year or more, graduate degree holders and broadband access subscribers.

Home buyers like a virtual real estate tour because they provide them with an immediate and efficient way to view and eliminate the homes they don't like and choose the homes they want to go see in person. For sellers it can mean less foot traffic, but just as many, if not more eyeballs on their home for sale.



Toll Free 1-866-947-8687 | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com



It's a particularly common tool in the high-end market, where the best are professionally produced in living color, often with voice-overs as if the real estate agent is along for the virtual real estate tour. The best are also easy to navigate, allowing you to smoothly tour the listing room by room, as if you were walking through the home and looking up and down, left and right.

Virtual real estate tour making also takes skilled professionals to output high-quality, life-like videos. A virtual real estate tour produced unprofessionally can harm a listing more than help it. Occasionally, the best virtual real estate tour may not be of the home itself, but, say, of its unobstructed view of the mountains, hillsides or meadow. Putting a home's unique feature in its best light with a virtual real estate tour and leaving the rest to good old still photography remains an

option.

For example, it's nearly impossible to overcome "bloating" rooms when the confines of a small space forces the virtual real estate tour maker to snap on the wide angle lens to capture the flow of the room. Real Hollywood magic on the silver screen or an in-person visit remains necessary to see a home as it really exists.



Toll Free 1-866-947-8687 | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com



One Real Estate Company's Experience...

"In the past, we spent way too much time touring houses," says Matt Bowler, one of four Residential Sales Managers for Coldwell Banker Hubbell in Lansing, Michigan. "Because of a virtual real estate tour, it's cut our house-hunting timeframes in half. I think a virtual real estate tour is a great benefit... They are an excellent listing tool.

"I wouldn't list my house with a REALTOR that didn't utilize a virtual real estate tour."

While the value of a virtual real estate tour may not be questioned by many professional REALTORS today, selecting a virtual real estate tour provider often provokes a series of questions, including:

- What do virtual real estate tour providers charge?
- Who will pay for the virtual real estate tours? The real estate company? Its agents? The seller?
- How easy is it to produce and post virtual real estate tours on the Internet?
- Are there differences in the quality of the virtual real estate tours that can be produced?
- What features should I request from my virtual real estate tour provider?

The following is a glimpse into the experience of Coldwell Banker Hubbell Real Estate (ColdwellBankerHubbell.com) of Lansing, Michigan. Founded in 1969, this brokerage began using virtual real estate tours in 1999. The vast majority of the estimated \$475 million real estate sold by this brokerages' 200 independent agents in 2003 will be residential & new construction (88%). Generally, 11% of the firm's sales are relocation and 1% is commercial.

"We wanted to be on the cutting edge," recalls Kristen VanDeventer, Operations Manager of the brokerage. "We wanted to offer virtual real estate tours. In 1999, one other real estate company in our area was producing their own virtual real estate tours, but another virtual real estate tour vendor gave us the opportunity to link our tours onto the REALTOR.com corporate site. At the time, I think they were the only vendor that could provide that service.



Toll Free 1-866-947-8687 | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com



"We originally signed-on to produce 100 tours a month with the virtual real estate tour vendor. We set our own criteria at the time that to qualify for a virtual real estate tour of a listing, the property had to list for \$60,000 and above, and sign-on for a minimum listing term of 120 days. We did not sell the virtual real estate tours back to our agents, which is important. The company picked up the cost for those virtual real estate tours. A lot of other companies require their agents to pay for

virtual real estate tours.”

Three years later, VanDeventer viewed a CD-ROM demo from Real Tour Vision (RTV), a competing virtual tour vendor, and decided to switch providers. Why?

“Quality,” says VanDeventer. “Hands down, Real Tour Vision has a much better product in terms of the whole layout and the way they can personalize tours with the agent’s name and picture. At that time, (our original vendor) did not offer personalization. RTV imagery was better. It was faster. It had a larger viewing window and glare-free window shots. It was, by far, a better product.

“RTV is easier to navigate,” chimes in Bowler. “The upload time is a lot quicker. I think overall it’s a major improvement from what we had.”

“RTV also has lots of options to view a tour,” adds VanDeventer. “There’s a quick link button in the upper right hand corner of Hot Spots which we can even customize with our own logo if we want. There’s back and next buttons. Zoom in and out, up and down. There’s city info. Bookmarking to your favorites. It’s very spelled out.”

Because the RTV process includes a review by RTV staff of each tour before it goes online, VanDeventer believes RTV manages quality to a greater extent than other virtual real estate tour providers. She explains, “If there is a problem, we usually get an email explaining where the problem is and why it needs to be fixed. If they (RTV) don’t see an appropriate stitch in a room, it’s sent back and we have to re-do it... From my standpoint it’s having that connection... that makes working with RTV worthwhile.”

However, when VanDeventer considered switching to RTV, RTV could not post virtual tours onto REALTOR.com[®], the national portal site that is the official Web site of the National Association of REALTORS[®].



Toll Free **1-866-947-8687** | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com



According to VanDeventer, “When we first looked at RTV, we understood that we would have to give up exposure on REALTOR.com and that was a factor. But because of the quality and service of RTV, that didn’t matter to us.”

Since that time, Real Tour Vision has become one of 21 companies recognized as an accepted provider of a virtual real estate tour by REALTOR.com[®] and its PicturePath[™] program. Now, for a minimal additional fee, virtual real estate tours produced using the RTV system can also appear on more than 700 national and regional real estate Web sites, such as ColdwellBanker.com, Century21.com, ERA.com, PrudentialRealEstate.com and RealtyExecutives.com.

“RTV is growing and they are adding new features all the time, including audio,” says VanDeventer. “So their personal service, their commitment to improve and the fact that they cost less overall than our original vendor, were compelling reasons for us to switch virtual tour providers.



Toll Free **1-866-947-8687** | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com



“And when an outside still photo might need to be redone because of a change in seasons, they don’t charge us to re-do it. We don’t have to pay for that.””

Says VanDeventer, “We have downloaded virtual real estate tours onto disk and used them at Model Homes in subdivisions. When you get a model home and you get it all decorated and you know it’s one that you will build over and over again, we will download the tour to keep it in inventory. When the model is sold, we’ll still be able to show the virtual real estate tour, even though a buyer might not be able to personally walk-through the model.”

“We believe the audio tour that RTV is now offering will be a great new feature for these walk-throughs of model homes..

Another RTV feature that appealed to VanDeventer was the ability to sell banner advertising on tour windows, thereby reducing the overall cost of the virtual tour. Says Bowler, “Right now we have a mortgage company as a co-sponsor who buys banner ads on our virtual real estate tours. Home inspectors, title companies and others can help defray costs of virtual real estate tours to the REALTOR when you sell that banner ad space.”

“It’s been going so smooth,” says VanDeventer. “Even like this weekend, I emailed RTV asking about ways to streamline the high volume of tours we are producing. First thing Monday morning, I received a phone call and RTV suggested things we could do to streamline the process without sacrificing quality. It’s just great. I know when I need something, RTV is going to answer.

“RTV’s service is why I have very few agents decline a virtual real estate tour with a listing. Our price range now is any listing over \$99,000. I’d say 90% of those listings that qualify do include a virtual real estate tour.

“Customers have told us ‘what a great job,’ ” says VanDeventer. “I like having the best.”



Toll Free **1-866-947-8687** | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com



About Real Tour Vision™

Real Tour Vision™ (RTV™) is leveraging the Internet with 360° Panoramic Virtual Real Estate Tours that are already in demand by Real Estate firms, Resorts, Universities, Hospitals, and many other businesses that benefit from providing an online, e-mail or disk/CD-ROM tour of properties or facilities. RTV Virtual Real Estate Tour is distinguished by their high quality, speed of delivery and many features (including audio). RTV Dealers buy a turnkey business complete with proprietary software, comprehensive start-up kit and strong profit potential. Real Tour Vision™ and RTV™ are trademarks of Real Tour Vision, Inc.

[Home](#) | [Virtual Tour Software](#) | [RTV Tour Builder Kits](#) | [Order a Virtual Tour](#) | [Start A Virtual Tour Business](#) | [Virtual Tour Software Support](#)

[Virtual Tour Search](#) | [Order Form](#) | [Real Tour Vision News](#) | [Testimonials](#) | [About Us](#) | [Information](#) | [Request](#) | [Contact](#)



Toll Free **1.866.947.8687** | Email: info@realtourvision.com | www.realtourvision.com | [Site Map](#)

