



AGENT MARKETING

LOCAL MARKET CONDITIONS

NEWS & ADVICE

ABOUT REALTY TIMES

Search Realty Times

Agent Toolbox

Contact Us

Subscribe

Advertise

Preferred Vendors

Support

Login

Agent Safety

Agent News > Columnist Blanche Evans

Virtual Tours As Lead Generators

by *Blanche Evans*

Any portal that features listings will agree that listings with virtual tours are viewed more frequently by online consumers than those with few or no photos.

Fewer than 10 percent of listings are enhanced with virtual tours, yet homes with multiple photos and virtual tours are preferred by buyers when browsing homes online, according to the [National Association of Realtors](#) and its official Website, [Realtor.com](#). A staggering 25 percent of homes have no photos at all, despite an increase in viewership of about 100 percent for every photo added to a listing. By the time a listing features six photos, viewership has increased 558 percent over listings with no photos, says Realtor.com.

One company is taking lead generation through virtual tours to the next level.

[Virtual Imaging Corp. \(VIC\)](#), a virtual tour provider and MLS photography conglomerate of over 500 photographers in over 70 cities, has released a new feature called 'URLinxTM' feature on their custom VICTour virtual tour product which embeds the agent's URL links (Website links) into the virtual tour.

The purpose is to help direct potential homebuyers back to the listing agent's Website after viewing the tour.

Virtual tours are popular with full-service agents, says the company. The VICTour has been increasingly more popular with its unique customer branding, agent photos and custom text scene description capabilities, says Jeff Michaels, vice president of sales and marketing for Virtual Imaging Corporation.

"Agents directly benefit," says Michaels, "because not only do they receive additional exposure from the personalized branding, but they also increase the likelihood that a prospective buyer will use them for their home search."



Columnist Blanche Evans

Spotlight

Agent News

- | Virtual Tours As Lead Generators
- | Walkable Communities: The Physical Environment
- | Why Realtor.com's New Featured Agent Advertising Has NAR Approval
- | The Sunset Of Reduced Income Tax Rates
- | Realtor.com To Teach Agents Differences Between Listing And Marketing
- | How To Get More Business By Creating A "Visible Identity"



URLinx™ directs buyers to first look through the listing agent's inventory instead of pushing them out to a third-party aggregator site where the lead may likely be lost, explains Michaels.

"Buyers have shared repeatedly that they are looking first and foremost for a home, then for an agent. The VICTour with the URLinx™ feature puts those buyers directly in touch with agents using our product."

Increasingly, buyers are using the Internet to preview homes. According to the National Association of Realtors, 72 percent of 3,000 buyers surveyed in a recent study drove by or viewed a house for sale as a result of searching the Internet. Forty-six percent walked through a house after first visiting the home online and seventy-eight percent found photos of the houses they saw listed on the Internet "very useful." Forty-six percent said virtual tours were useful, and only 15 percent of online buyers failed to use virtual tours in their previewing process.

Virtual tours can lead to success stories.

"I had taken over another agent's listing that wasn't getting much activity, so I decided to put a virtual tour [VICTour] on the property," said Steve Taylor, Broker Associate of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage NRT in Littleton, CO. "Within 10 days, I had sold the property to a buyer that contacted me as a result of seeing the virtual tour."

John Giaimo, vice president of business development for [Realty Times](#) has observed that virtual tours present a unique opportunity for personal exposure for listing agents. He is working with Virtual Imaging Corporation to add virtual tours to [The Real Estate Update](#), Realty Times' popular e-newsletter. To view a prototype, click [here](#).

Published: November 4, 2003



E-MAIL THIS!



PRINT THIS!



FEEDBACK!

Related Articles:

- | [Virtual Tours Are Changing The Traditional Open House](#)
- | [Realtor.com To Teach Agents Differences Between Listing And Marketing](#)
- | [Arguments To Use Against Photo-Lazy Agents](#)

| The Sorry State Of Internet Listings



Blanche Evans is the publisher of [Agent News](#) and the associate editor of [Realty Times](#), the Internet's largest independent real estate news service. She is the author of two best-selling real estate books: [The Hottest e-Careers In Real Estate](#), [Real Estate](#)

[Education Company](#), an Internet marketing primer for real estate professionals, and [homesurfing.net: The Insider's Guide To Buying And Selling Your Home Using The Internet](#), [Dearborn](#), a consumer homebuying and selling guide. In 2000, she was recognized by the editors of REALTOR(r) Magazines as one of the 25 Most Influential People In Real Estate.

- | E-mail Blanche at: blanche@realtytimes.com
- | For more articles by Blanche, [Click Here](#)

Copyright © 2003 Realty Times. All Rights Reserved.

[Agent Marketing](#) | [Local Market Conditions](#) | [News & Advice](#) | [About Realty Times](#)
[Site Map](#) | [Article Index](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Credits](#)