

REAL ESTATE

Engel & Vlkers equips agents with VR technology for listing innovation

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3D virtual tour example from immoviewer

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Real estate firm Engel & Vlkers North America will be the latest to tap virtual reality for homebuyers to view listings as real as it can get without stepping foot into the location of interest.

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Engel & Vlkers is launching a North American-wide program that will see Google Cardboard viewers placed at each of its real estate offices, as well as cameras to record VR video. Interested homebuyers that do not have the time to visit a listing will be able to view VR videos right in the real estate office.

"As the first real estate company to arm all of its shops with virtual reality technology and capabilities we are taking the first step industry-wide toward what we recognize as a fast-growing trend that will eventually be the standard for premium level service," said Anthony Hitt, CEO of **E&V North America**. "We are combining technology and a relationship-based business to create a better consumer experience, which is our focus every day.

"Our business is built on providing premium customer service, which means recognizing innovation and committing to it so it becomes a central and consistent offering throughout our network," he said.

Listing innovations

The real estate firm will be arming its agents with more capability to initiate a sale. More and more consumers are interested in video in relation to a real estate purchase, and Engel & Vlkers is delivering on that need and then some.

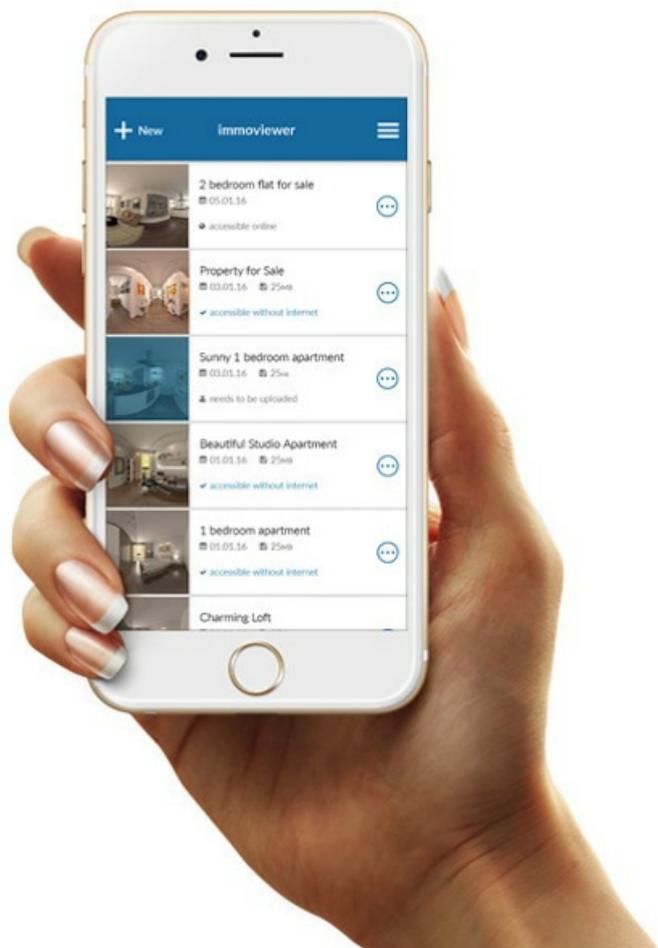


Immoviewer desktop platform

German-based virtual reality company immoviewer will be working with the firm to provide the technology for the

new initiative. Immoviewer will deliver virtual reality cameras for local Engel & Vlkers associates to capture 3D views of listings that will help replicate the in-person tour.

The VR company will also be providing tutorials and educational content for Engel & Vlkers team members to learn how to capture their own VR content. The equipment is made for any consumer to use, without the need of a professional videographer.



Immoviewer app

Homebuyers will be able to leverage the Google Cardboard headsets and smartphones at real estate offices and online to view the 3D tours.

Real estate and VR

Virtual Reality and real estate have been coming together more and more recently. The two sectors go hand in hand, as consumers are often interested in the most information possible regarding listings right away.

This will allow them to get a view close to the real thing, right away, without having to travel.

For instance, Sotheby's International Realty took a page from Google Maps and is allowing interested buyers a chance to tour properties without leaving their homes.

The real estate firm is now including an option to view listings via 3D and virtual reality capabilities in which users can tap around the screen to tour homes of interest. Viewable on smartphones, VR headsets and desktop sites, the Sotheby's 3D tour user experience resembles Google Maps, making it easy on new users ([see more](#)).

However, it is not just VR that is growing in technology with real estate. A glimpse into the future can be gleaned from real estate development and the technological advances implemented in new builds, said a senior executive from Corcoran Sunshine Marketing Group.

During Luxury Interactive 2016's "Futuristic Lessons from Real Estate Development: How Technology is Transforming the Planning and Marketing of Luxury Residences" keynote, Corcoran's executive compared the George Jetson-like advertisements of the 1950s to today's building projects to explain how elements of these blueprints offer a window into the future. Residential housing's future rests on the technologies of today and their impact on architectural programming to exterior and interior design ([see more](#)).

"According to NAR, 73 percent of homeowners say they're more likely to list with a realtor offering video, but only 9 percent of agents do," Engel & Vlkers' Mr. Hitt said. "Through our commitment to virtual reality we are catapulting our agent network beyond that 9 percent, taking it to the next level with 3D.

"It's a differentiator when you compare a home listed with photos only, versus virtual reality," he said. "It extends the reach of our listings with additional dimension in a beautiful and detailed way.

"It also saves time for our buyers who may not be able to visit every home of interest. Time is the ultimate luxury, and we believe this immersive integration will create an exceptional experience for homebuyers and sellers. As an international real estate company, virtual reality tours are even more valuable."

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