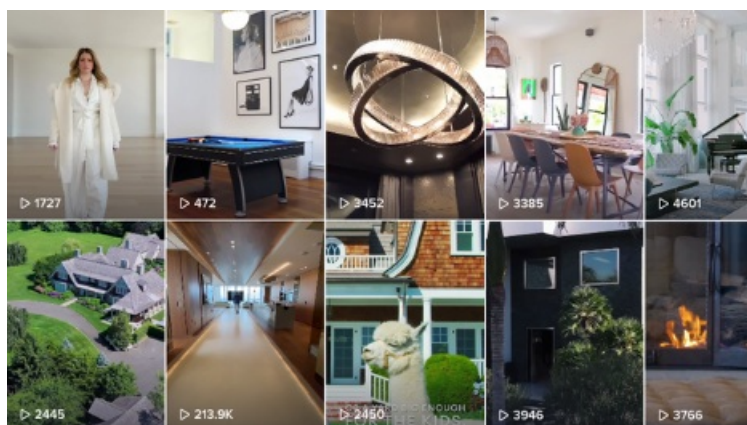


REAL ESTATE

Why luxury real estate brokers need to be on TikTok

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Douglas Elliman joined TikTok in spring 2020. Image credit: Douglas Elliman/TikTok

By SARAH RAMIREZ

While short-form video platform TikTok may be best-known for viral trends and its popularity among Generation Z consumers, its use as a legitimate marketing tool continues to grow, even in the world of luxury real estate.

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As real estate brokers embrace more digital tools to share listings and build client relationships, savvy agents are finding success on TikTok in unexpected ways.

"The primary goal for luxury brokers on TikTok is to build and market their personal brands," said Aaron Grushow, agent with the estates division of **Aaron Kirman Group** at Compass, Beverley Hills, CA. "This can be done by promoting listings, noteworthy sales or just showcasing your daily work life in creative ways that align with the TikTok audience."

"Agents can stand out by getting in front of the camera, displaying a sense of humor or creatively integrating TikTok trends into your run-of-the-mill real estate content," he said. "Generating leads or finding buyers for your luxury listings is secondary."

Real estate meets TikTok

TikTok, the most downloaded mobile app of 2020, has a large global audience dominated by younger consumers.

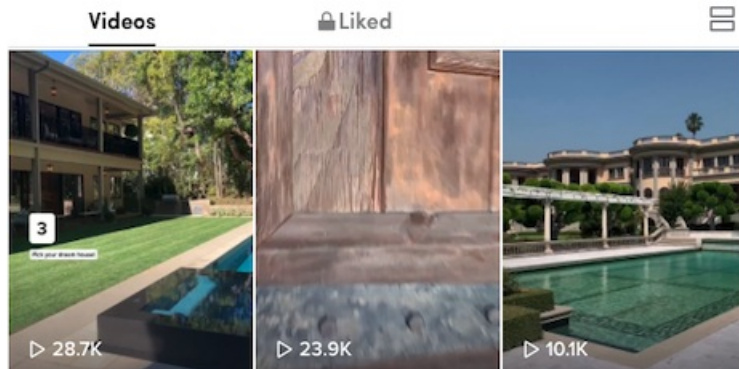
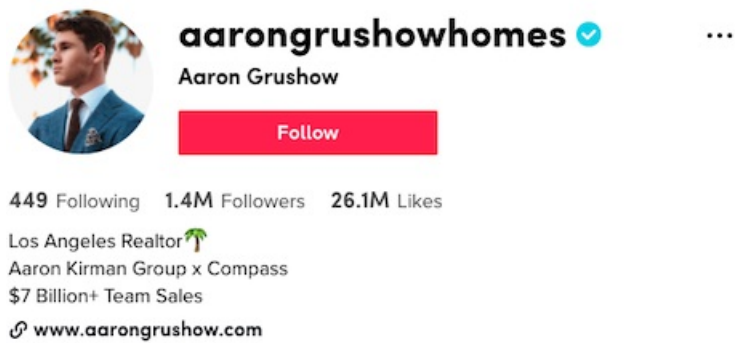
As of August 2020, TikTok had about 100 million monthly active users in the U.S. alone. According to Statista, about 60 percent of active U.S. users on the platform are below the age of 30, encompassing Gen Z and younger millennials.

While it may seem as if TikTok is not an ideal match for prospective luxury real estate clients, many brokerages and agents believe there is a lot of untapped potential by using the platform.

"I'll admit, TikTok's audience, largely comprising Gen Z and millennial users, is not the most optimal audience to be selling luxury homes to," said Mr. Grushow, who has more than 1.4 million followers on the app.

"However, it's not always about that; sometimes it's about getting your name out there to as many people as

possible," he said. "TikTok's algorithm allows for extreme exposure potential that agents should be taking advantage of."



Aaron Grushow receives thousands of views on his TikTok videos.

TikTok's "For You" feed, powered by its proprietary algorithm, is one of its most notable features.

Personalized for each user, the feed suggests content based on several factors including user interactions and video information, such as music or hashtags which are weighed differently based on user value. TikTok also works to diversify recommendations and interrupt repetitive patterns.

As a result, a creator or brand does not necessarily need to have a larger follower base to gain traction and reach a wide audience.

"It's amazing how many views, followers and likes you're able to get in the matter of minutes on TikTok," said Scott Durkin, president and chief operating officer at **Douglas Elliman**. "It allows our brand to reach the masses in a new way, versus more traditional marketing methods."

Douglas Elliman's public relations and social media teams had been considering joining TikTok when the COVID-19 pandemic began, forcing the brokerage to prioritize how to safely show properties. With its emphasis on short-form content, the platform also has lower overhead costs than other high-production efforts.

"In less than 60 seconds, we are able to invite the public inside of some of the country's best real estate," Mr. Durkin said. "It's fun, engaging, energetic and aspirational."

"Once the brokerage launched its TikTok account, @douglasellimanrealestate, many of our agents followed suit," he said. "They are not only showing property, but using the platform to advise first-time homebuyers, tour neighborhoods and explain a day-in-the-life of a real estate broker."

Since TikTok is a platform that revolves heavily on trends, real estate agents using it should be aware of popular content to incorporate those themes into their own content.

Among Mr. Grushow's recommendations for newcomers to TikTok are keeping videos concise, incorporating captions and fast-paced editing, using relevant hashtags, add trending music and prioritizing vertical filming.

Reaching millennial investors

While TikTok may seem intimidating to users outside of its primary audience, industry experts believe now is the time to invest in the platform.

"Although TikTok's audience is young, you never know who is watching your videos," Mr. Grunshow said. "As the platform ages, its audience will as well."

"Instagram and Facebook both started with young audiences, and look where they're at now," he said. "Become an early adopter and reap the benefits of a long-term play."

Douglas Elliman's Mr. Durkin agrees, and believes that TikTok's younger user base is actually an advantage.

"This is the exact audience we want to be targeting," Mr. Durkin said. "Millennials are said to buy the most real estate in the next year."

Millennial millionaires make up only 2 percent of the total millionaire population in the United States, but their wealth and influence will continue to grow ahead of the Great Wealth Transfer. Many are turning to real estate to further build their wealth, and more than nine in 10 millennial millionaires are homeowners as of 2019 ([see story](#)).

In a recent report, Sotheby's International Realty notes that the recent boom in luxury home sales is promising. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone in the market as city dwellers are migrating to suburbs, baby boomers are retiring, and millennials are seeking properties in more affordable cities ([see story](#)).

"We want to educate the next generation on our industry and give them the tools they need to one day buy their own dream home," Mr. Durkin said. "It is also about first-touch branding and building a pipeline of communication in order to reach people a year or two before they are ready to buy or rent property."

"At the same time, TikTok teaches us what that generation is looking for in terms of lifestyle, design, location, etc."

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