

REAL ESTATE

## Visual marketing remains nonnegotiable in competitive real estate market

June 17, 2021



Poor staging or photography can lower home values. Image credit: Luxury Portfolio International

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Real estate agents and brokers only have one chance to make a first impression, so quality photography and professional staging are essential investments for successfully marketing prestige properties.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

During the Luxury Hour webinar hosted by [Luxury Portfolio International](#) on June 16, photography and design experts shared best practices for visual marketing. Even in a competitive market with fast-moving inventory, getting professional photography and staging right is a key differentiator for agents and brokers.

"Your listing is going to sell, but as agents are we doing everything possible to make sure we're maximizing the value," said Vince Collura, chief operating officer at real estate photography and staging firm [VHT Studios](#), New York. "Are we building our luxury portfolio? Are we our book of business in our history today to fuel our business tomorrow?"

Luxury Hour was moderated by Mickey Alam Kahn, president of Luxury Portfolio International and editor in chief of *Luxury Daily*, New York.

Look at this photograph

Investing in visual marketing whether that be photography, videography or staging is more than an investment in a specific listing because it helps professionals build their portfolios.

"You have to present yourself as a luxury agent," said Lucy Edwards, director of client success at VHT Studios, New York. "Therefore, you need to build the brand, you need to build the reputation, you need to invest in yourself."

According to Mr. Collura, an avid photographer, there are red flags for agents and brokers to be aware of when looking to hire photographers. He advises avoiding photographers who emphasize "angles" rather than "composition," as well as those who are underpriced.



*The first photo does not reflect the possibility of the pool area and unnecessarily includes part of the lawn. Image credit: VHT Studios*

Ms. Edwards also advised that agents discourage sellers from asking for too many photos of the same room or feature, as potential buyers may lose interest before viewing an entire listing. Some prospective buyers may not look past the first photo, particularly if it is taken on a smartphone or otherwise appears to be an amateur shot.

"Ninety-four percent of buyers look online first before they even decide to see your property, especially in the luxury market," said Birgit Anich, CEO and creative director at [BA Staging & Interiors](#), Norwalk, CT. "We see buyers now that do not come visit the property in person.

"For many of the luxury buyers, it is a secondary home it could be a vacation home or investment so they may not necessarily buy it walking through it in-person," she said. "The online representation of the property is extremely important to create that first impression and make them want to purchase the property."

Ms. Anich also reiterated that staging and photography work together for a cohesive listing presentation. The most effective stagings have curated looks that hint at lifestyles while complimenting the architectural style and features of a property.

"You leave money on the table if you don't stage because of the perceived value," Ms. Anich said. "You can increase the sales price by 5 to 25 percent by staging your property, which is a huge return on investment."



*Since this room has not been staged, it feels unwelcoming and lacks warmth. Image credit: BA Staging & Interiors*

Panelists also walked through common mistakes in real estate photography.

For instance, a poorly composed shot may draw unnecessary attention on unnecessary details while neglecting to show the true potential and scale of a space. In bad stagings, rooms may feel cold, lack a clear function or simply be too cluttered.

Instead, the best photos inspire prospective buyers to consider what it may like to make a property their future home.

#### Value in video

Video is also becoming a more popular tool for real estate marketing, from walk-throughs to aerial drone videos. Suggestions included keeping videos concise and focusing on evoking feelings instead of documenting every detail of a property.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, agents and brokers have often taken the role of presenting video tours on Zoom, Facebook Live or Instagram Live ([see story](#)). Real estate brokerage Re/Max also recently introduced a video editor tool to help its agent make professional-quality videos using their own content ([see story](#)).

Meanwhile, 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 for luxury real estate continues to grow.

With its emphasis on short-form content, the platform also has lower overhead costs than other high-production efforts while allowing firms to safely show properties. Agents can also showcase their personalities on TikTok to differentiate themselves ([see story](#)).

"Video is one of the best products and services that you can really use and to promote, not just that particular property, but the brand and your reputation," VHT Studios' Ms. Edwards said. "It is part of your brand and reputation to be creative and to introduce the property the right way."

---

© 2022 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.