

DRONES IN REAL ESTATE

STUNNING VISUALS FOR THE REAL ESTATE AGENT

By Linda Shepherd

People read, watch movies, listen to music, and talk on the phone for one reason – because everyone loves a good story. Nowhere in everyday life is being a good storyteller more critical than in the real estate realm.

An agent's job.

It is an agent's job to tell the story of each property, whether it be new or previously enjoyed. New listings have a tale of birth and potential. Prior appreciated properties have established histories and the groundwork for new chapters.

Time has brought many changes.

For years if an agent wanted a spectacular, sweeping visual of a listing, they had to hire a photographer, helicopter or small plane. Now, thanks to advances in technology, bringing a property to life is faster and less costly.

In this era of the internet and smartphones, more than 80% of people looking to buy a piece of property use visuals to shop. How extraordinary for agents to have such an excellent resource. Just the time saved by sitting in an office and narrowing down listings, as opposed to driving, is tremendous.

Real estate advertising.

For decades real estate has been advertised through flyers, billboards, newspapers, and television or radio. In this modern era, clients can go online and see breathtaking views of a home or business they are considering. Some of these views are more spectacular than a property tour. Thanks to the use of drones with cameras, real estate agents can tell a listing's story visually and orally in ways previously unknown.

Whether the agent hires a drone pilot or learns to pilot one themselves, drones with cameras are an advertising and monetary asset. Homes showcased with drones, on average, sell faster and for more money than those using traditional advertising.

Drone or camera?

Small homes, apartments, condos, or properties without a view usually do not benefit from a drone experience.

The more substantial the property, astounding view, and open living space, the more profound an experience for the buyer when the agent uses a drone.

Also, think what a drone could do for selling commercial property. In thirty minutes or less a drone can capture the breadth of a warehouse, available parking or storage, office space, and potential for expanding an existing business. Thanks to a roving eye, new companies can envision a path to their future and growth.

Do-it-yourself or hire someone for drone photography?

Cost should not be the sole consideration when deciding on the use of a drone. The FAA has instituted rules and laws with substantial penalties for those not adhering to them. Anyone using a drone commercially is required to have a drone pilot's license and pass a pilot's course.

When deciding to hire or do it yourself the learning curve is something the agent should consider. It takes time, practice, and patience to produce video comparable to a professional's. Learning to fly a drone and taking the test for a pilot's license, may not be a financially sound decision.

Just as a sensational visual experience can elevate an agent's reputation, an amateurish, jerky, less than stellar show can tarnish a hard-earned standing. All professionals have a place in the real estate vocation, and experienced drone pilots have theirs.

Important considerations when deciding on drone usage.

Experience in piloting a drone, especially with a camera, should be at the top of an agent's list when making this decision. All pilots are not created equal, and agents should research before making a final decision.

On average the cost of hiring a professional is approximately two hundred dollars and up. A standard shoot usually consists of a one-minute video and several dozen still shots. The room by room shots can cost in the low thousands.

Someone selling a multimillion-dollar home or business should not have a problem with the cost when it brings a quick turnaround. MLS statistics show properties highlighted through the eyes of a drone sell 68% faster than traditionally showcased listings. On the agent's side, it would seem volume would make hiring a professional well worth the money.

Know what is expected of you when a drone is involved.

Drone usage in the United States is very regulated. Educate yourself, even if hiring someone to film for you. You are required to let the neighbors know when you are shooting. Notifying neighbors when and how long the drone is flying is considerate and preemptive. The last thing you want is the lady next door thinking you are filming her in the pool.

Should you decide to pilot a drone check with your insurance company and know if coverage is available. Drones can, and have been known, to fall from the sky. When hiring a pilot check on their insurance coverage and make sure it is current and applicable. Anyone you hire should provide you with references, examples of their work, and their personal pilot's license. Agent's

should do their homework and choose someone with a solid reputation and established background. The National Association of Realtors, (NAR), is striving to keep realtors current on changes in the use of drones.

The sky is the limit.

Seeing a home and property through the eye of a drone is both impressive and exhilarating. Drones can take some of the most amazing, stunning shots imaginable. Agents who do their due diligence and are in touch with today's customers understand expectations are high for buyers and sellers.

Embracing technology and using it to their advantage will elevate agents and companies. Those agent's not investing in this type of advertising should explore what drones have to offer them and their customers.

What is next? We now have AI painters, carpenters, welders, and Robo-Buddy, who is a "Jack-of-all-trades." Will we someday meet with Robo-Realty? Looking to the future means realtors should now be laying the groundwork for their reputations as leaders and innovators.

The sky, albeit with drones zipping around trees and power lines, is still the limit for realtors, sellers, and buyers.