

4 reasons buyers and sellers love virtual property tours

Although virtual property viewings have taken off in South Africa as a way for the real estate industry to counter the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, experts reveal this new technology is being welcomed by buyers and sellers alike for more than just health and safety reasons.



Image: supplied

Here are the biggest advantages that have led property experts to believe virtual tours and showhouses will remain essential real estate sales tools, long after the pandemic is done.

Low risk sales experience

“Virtual viewing experiences are invaluable for narrowing down a pool of potential buyers to only those who are seriously interested in a property and, ideally, qualified to buy it,” says Craig Mott, Cape Town regional sales manager for the Rawson Property Group. “In a Covid-19 context, this is important for reducing face-to-face interactions and potential exposure to the virus, but there are other safety benefits for sellers as well.”

While the risk of crime during open houses is minimal with proper security protocol in place, Mott says some sellers can feel uncomfortable, nonetheless. Virtual viewings offer the perfect way to reach a wide pool of buyers without revealing your address (unless you choose to) or opening your home to potentially unsavoury visitors.

Less disruption for sellers

Offering virtual tours also means sellers won't need to spring-clean and vacate their home on multiple showhouse Sundays. This, Mott says, is one of the biggest pain points of residential sales.

“Nobody enjoys having to pack up their personal belongings and valuables and find somewhere to take the kids and pets every time their house goes on show,” he says. “With interactive virtual tours, you only need to prep your home once. Potential buyers can then explore virtually, in their own time and from the comfort of their own homes, without impacting you or your family at all.”

Of course, sellers will still usually need to clear out when serious buyers visit in person, but a good virtual tour should dramatically reduce the number of times this is necessary.



Technology complements rather than replaces show houses as a sales tool

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Time-saver for buyers

Virtual property tours are not just time-savers for sellers. Mott says buyers are also loving the convenience of being able to vet properties more effectively before visiting in person.

“Visiting properties can be a fun experience, but it can also become very time-intensive,” he says. “Photographs seldom tell the whole story, so you inevitably end up viewing homes that don’t meet your expectations and skipping ones that could be perfect but weren’t photographed well.”

Interactive virtual tours let buyers explore details that aren’t necessarily covered in the listing photographs, and experience important elements like flow, light, views, features and flaws. This enables them to make a much more informed decision on which homes to view in person, saving valuable time.

Easier long-distance purchases

Buyers moving to new towns, provinces or countries may not have the luxury of viewing a home in person at all. In these cases, Mott says virtual tours have become priceless during the selection process.

“Being able to explore a property without having to be physically present is a huge benefit for long-distance purchasers,” says Mott, “to the point that I wouldn’t be surprised if they excluded listings without virtual viewings from consideration altogether in future.”

This, Mott says, makes virtual viewings a great way for sellers to stand out from their competition, and tap into a much wider buyer pool than before.

Virtual property services aren’t a flash-in-the-pan fad, and those who have not adapted to embrace the technology are going to find themselves falling further and further behind.

