



Free Daily Headlines | RSS Feeds | Syndication

News

Agents reveal video secrets

Hire pros or DIY to build traffic, business
BY MATT CARTER | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2009
Inman News

Comments
Email
Reprint Rights
Community Guidelines

Bookmarking Sites
del.icio.us
digg
newsvine
reddit
stumbleupon

Story Tools Sponsored by:



NEW YORK -- Video can boost Web site traffic and generate business for real estate agents and brokers, whether they hire a professional production company to shoot elaborate videos showcasing agents, listings and neighborhoods or create impromptu shorts with their own handheld camera.



That's according to some agents and brokers who are putting video to good use and who agreed to share some of their secrets today at the Inman News [Real Estate Connect conference](#) in New York City.

Ian Watt, a Vancouver, Canada, Realtor specializing in condos, cranks out [informal videos](#) for his blog -- often while piloting his car through slow-moving traffic. The improvised videos showcase Watt's knowledge of local market conditions and have helped him connect with a loyal, tech-savvy clientele, he said.

"I'm not trying to promote properties -- it's just my opinion I'm throwing out there," Watt said.

The videos caught the attention of the Vancouver Sun newspaper, which said the shorts have transformed his blog "into a live show" featuring Watt touring the city "dispensing advice, hitting real estate hot buttons, winning over fans and enraging critics."

Despite his success with the unscripted videos, Watt believes videos of property listings should be shot with professional production standards that incorporate skillful lighting, camera angles and editing techniques.

While some real estate brokers and agents are developing those skills themselves, there are a growing number of video production companies shooting custom-made shorts for the industry.

Tara Jones, co-owner of Atlanta, Ga.-based [Reel Dwellings TV](#), left a career in television news to produce videos for the real estate industry, after realizing that agents and brokers wanted to commission videos with higher production standards.

Jones said the company tends to produce more agent profiles and neighborhood videos showcasing a community's strong points, because those pieces have a longer shelf life -- up to two years -- than home tours produced for individual listings.



Advertise with Inman

Headlines

Most Recent | Most Comments | Most Emailed

- Agents reveal video secrets
- Blaming agents for home-price run-up
- A lesson in real estate education
- Real estate wake-up call
- Compile 'B' list at Connect
- Manhattan sales down, prices up in Q4
- MyDealBook becomes GreenPearl.com
- Readers: Tech isn't the only answer
- Expect Fed to take more giant steps
- Xobni integrates inbox with networking

Reel Dwellings charges \$200 to \$2,000 to produce a video, Jones said. A Reel Dwellings short screened for an audience at a Connect session, "Four Killer Uses for Real Estate Video," cost about \$1,000 to produce.

Even through production costs for Web videos are only a fraction of traditional TV spots, cost can still be an issue, and not all listings justify their own professionally produced video.

"I don't think video sells houses -- I think you sell the house," Jones said. "The video gets (clients) to pick up the phone and call you, and then the ball is in your court."

The price of a property may determine whether a listing justifies the expense of a professionally produced video, said Matthew Leone, marketing manager for Terra Marketing. New York-based Terra Marketing produces videos for sister company [Halstead Property](#) (both companies share the same parent, Terra Holdings LLC), which specializes in high-end apartments and condos.

Terra Marketing has been able to bring production costs down by commissioning several shorts at a time.

"If you work a lot with one vendor ... you can get a great rate, and bring it down to an affordable level," Leone said.

Doug Heddings, a senior vice president at [Prudential Douglas Elliman](#) in New York, said he's sold two "very expensive" properties where the buyers saw video but never stepped into the home. One buyer, a woman from Italy, shared the link for the video of the property she was interested in with family members before outbidding six other would-be buyers, Heddings said.

"I feature the building history, neighborhood information and specifics of the property," Heddings said. "Once they've seen the video, they feel like they've actually seen the home."

Heddings -- who also authors the blog [True Gotham](#) -- said he pays an average of \$500 per listing for property tour videos. But with the average apartment in his market selling for \$1.5 million, he can justify the expense.

Halstead Property, which produces a popular video report on New York City market conditions called "Behind the Numbers," recommends video profiles for all of its agents, Leone said. The company is also branching out into videos for listings, having found "a lack of engagement" on the company's Web site.

While the site already offers a wealth of other multimedia content, including photos, floor plans and virtual tours, "You feel in the end that there is still (a larger) story to be told about the property" through video, Leone said.

Brokers should subsidize the cost of producing videos, absorbing 30 to 50 percent of an agent's cost, Leone said, because videos create more content for their site. "It promotes the company as much as the agent, so the company should be able to see the value in it, and be willing to pony up for the agent," Leone said.

Jones said Reel Dwellings had one broker commission a community profile video showcasing a neighborhood's selling points, which it in turn sold to agents.

Video attracts Web site traffic because of its viral nature and because it's increasingly likely to show up in search-engine results. Many Web video host companies -- including Heddings' and Leone's favorite, [Wellcomemat.com](#) -- generate HTML code for users that makes it easy for their videos to be embedded in any Web site. Adobe makes a tool that helps search engines key in to identify words spoken in a video.

"We did a piece on an Atlanta neighborhood, and they said the name (of the neighborhood) 10 times in the video -- they noticed immediate (search engine) results," Jones said.

Jones recommended keeping videos under two minutes, noting that most television news pieces are closer to one minute and manage to cram in a lot of information. A longer video "might be interesting to you or the seller, but the average Joe -- they are going to walk away," Jones said.

©2009
Inman

Categories

- [Agent advice](#)
- [Buying & Selling](#)
- [Home Improvement](#)
- [Investing](#)
- [Investing & Perso...](#)
- [Markets & Econom...](#)
- [Mortgages](#)
- [Real Estate & Per...](#)
- [Real estate broke...](#)
- [Real estate techn...](#)
- [Rentals](#)
- [Data Center](#)
- [International](#)

Similar

- [Xobni integrates inbox with networking](#)
- [Home values by we, the people](#)
- [Rebuilding trust, image in downturn](#)
- [From 'Z' to 'A': Zillow Advice](#)
- [Application tracks loan process online](#)

News Archive

- [January 2009](#)
- [December 2008](#)
- [November 2008](#)
- [October 2008](#)
- [September 2008](#)
- [August 2008](#)
- [July 2008](#)
- [June 2008](#)
- [May 2008](#)
- [April 2008](#)
- [March 2008](#)
- [February 2008](#)



Ads by Google

[Improve RE Agency Income](#)

Easy, accurate, profitable business appraisal software for RE agents.

www.BusinessBookPress.co

Leone said longer videos can hold viewers' interest if they are fast-paced with lots of cutting.

Heddings said a video for a townhouse he's listing runs more than eight minutes, and if prospective buyers are serious, they will watch the whole thing. "If they are not interested in buying a home, I don't care if they watch my video."

Watt said that while the Vancouver market has cooled in the last 12 months -- it's now "back to normal" -- his Web site traffic and time on site have roughly doubled from a year ago. The videos have helped raised Watt's visibility to the point that he's even been recognized in public by at least one stranger he'd never met.

He also uses Google Analytics to track results -- an important part of a video campaign.

Leone said Halstead Property has created a searchable, dedicated video "mini site," HalsteadProperTV, and sees two to three times as much traffic on listings with videos, with referrals from "places we've never seen -- blogs of companies and individuals (whose links) we haven't paid a dime for."

What's your opinion? Leave your comments below or send a [letter to the editor](#).

Copyright 2009 [Inman News](#)

All rights reserved. This content may not be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever, in part or in whole, without written permission of Inman News. Use of this content without permission is a violation of federal copyright law.

You must [login](#) or [register](#) to post a comment.

Ads by Google

[Make \\$28,750 Every Month](#)

By Helping the Government Bailout Distressed Homeowners - FREE Guide!
www.ShortSaleMagic.com

[Foreclosure Millionaires?](#)

I Made \$118,619.87 In 1 Month w/The Easiest Short Sale Method On Earth!
ShortSalesRiches.com

[Own your local FSBO site](#)

Attn: Real Estate & Mortgage Pro's. Help Fsbo's in your exclusive city.
www.HomesByOwner.co

[How A Shy Real Estate](#)

Agent Made \$280K & Sold 120 Homes In 40 Hours/Wk. - See How Inside
[Secrets.ClientLunchbox.c](#)

[157 DC Area Fixer Uppers](#)

Better than Foreclosures, HUD Homes Buy Real Estate with \$0 Down.
www.MyHouseDeals.com/DC-VA-MI

[Investing in Real Estate?](#)

Learn To Do It Right, To Make Money Make a Fortune in Real Estate Fast!
www.FreeFlippingTips.com

[We Quit Real Estate](#)

Now We Make \$71,592 A Month. No Selling. Real System. \$395 Start
MeetCarbonCopyPro.com

[Real Estate Investment](#)

Thinking about investing in real estate? Why not try self storage?
www.PellaBuildings.com

