



## Sell Your Home with Virtual Video Tours

Tilt to Soaring Ceilings, Zoom in on Gourmet Appliances to Bring the Home to Life

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As the economy continues to suffer, real estate agents across the country are [feeling the pinch](#).

But many hope that a new selling technique called video open houses could help [curb the decline in sales](#).

"You capture all the essence of the fireplace going or the fans moving," Anthony Benton of [HighResMediaLLC.com](#) told "Good Morning America." "Just little things that make you feel like you are in that room. You are actually there."

With half of Internet users regularly watching video on the Web, it was a market [real estate agents simply could not stay away from](#), and myriad production companies have sprung up that specialize in shooting videos for home sales.

Not too long ago, 360-degree static tours -- often just a string of still photographs stitched together -- were the height of virtual tour technology. Now these production companies are helping real estate agents take the tours to the next level.

"It's much more dynamic, much more succinct, much more quality flow than the old snap-and-shoot photos allowed," Dale Mattison of the [National Association of Realtors](#) said. "So it just brings a new dimension, a new reality to the experience for the consumer."

The videos tilt up to show off soaring ceilings, zoom in on gourmet appliances or peek out the window to show off charming neighborhoods -- and it's all professionally narrated.

The videos only cost a few hundred dollars and the fee comes out of the agent's commission, just like traditional advertising. But unlike signs on the road, the virtual tours can reach buyers across the nation.

"It's helping to get a lot more showings and I think a lot of the clients appreciate it because we're doing as much as we can in this market," Keller Williams Realty agent Geno Ross said.

### Shaky Hands of Do-It-Yourself Virtual Tour Makers

Now do-it-yourselfers are also getting in on the act. A search for "house for sale" in YouTube returns more than 8,000 results.

Some suffer from the lack of professional touch. One narrator highlights the house's cons rather than pros and another whips the camera around so quickly, the viewer is less likely to get the buying bug than get nauseous.

But even when they are not picture-perfect, videos allow potential homebuyers a more intimate, styled look at a house that could prompt an in-person, real-life tour.

### Tips for Creating Your Own Virtual Tour Video

- Don't pan around too quickly. Give the potential buyer time to take in the beauty of your house.
- Use the zoom sparingly. It's one feature that gets old quickly and, if used too often, will have less and less effect on the viewer.
- If you're showing something important, count to 10 in your head with the camera centered on it. Make sure the viewers have plenty of time to take it in.
- Consider using a tripod. Even the most steady-handed of us tend to wobble from time to time. Your viewers will thank you.