

Photography Matters!

Finding the Right Photographer

A picture may be worth a thousand words to a buyer, but it can mean THOUSANDS of dollars to you in commission income when your listing sells! Buyers want lots of well-shot photography so they can determine whether or not they want to make a personal visit to your listing, so the more outstanding photos you have, the better chance you have to schedule a showing and get a sale.

I've heard many Realtors say that they take their own photos and that they are *really good*. Ok? Really? Now, I need your permission to tell you the truth. The truth is that the photos you take with your Realtor camera are NOT really good. They are mediocre at best, and they definitely don't capture the heart and the mind of the buyer. (And, they won't get you the interview with the Seller either if your website is full of marginal looking listing photos.) *PLEASE*, (yes, I am pleading with you) do this right! Photography matters.

Professional photography doesn't have to be expensive, but it is the best investment you will make in the marketing of your listing and it will yield the best results out of anything that you do other than price it correctly. I generally pay between \$75 and \$150 to photograph each house depending on how many photos I want taken and the size of the home. Be sure to ask for the exclusive rights to the photos so you can use them any way that you want. Sometimes, I will also get the photographer to dash around to the park or other neighborhood amenities and get me some shots of the pool, playground, etc.

Photographers specialize just like we do. Make sure that you are hiring someone who does architectural photography, not portrait or other types. There is an art to the lighting and composition when shooting homes. I want clean, crisp photos that give lots of information to the buyer. I typically ask the photographer to stand in the corner of each room so that I have the shots that I want. You might want to "stitch" the photos together in some instances to see the full room. (Although I don't do that.) For exterior shots, I don't want to see another house in the photo. I want the subject to fill the frame. The photographer should suggest the appropriate time for the shoot depending on the position of the sun. You don't want shadows in the exterior photos.

To find the right photographer, look for the credits in photos you like in real estate publications or the real estate section of your newspaper. The photographer's name should appear just below the photo. Newspapers often have photographers that freelance. Once you find a good candidate or two, ask to see a portfolio or samples of their work. Tour Factory, a company that makes Video-type tours and posts them to

YouTube, is also an excellent source of photographers in many of the larger cities. *You don't have to use their product to see who their photographers are.* Simply go to their website, www.TourFactory.com, and look for the Professional Services box. Put in your zip code and the contact information for their contract photographer will come up. This is an excellent resource. Sometimes, there are multiple photographers in the same company. Ask for the one who is the most in demand, and that will be the one you want to use.

In the Member's Section on our website, www.MailYourselfARaiseIn30Days.com, I have posted the checklist that my photographer sends out to our sellers a few days before the shoot is scheduled. The checklist instructs the seller to do things like open curtains, adjust blinds, turn on all lights, turn off all fans, remove anything on countertops, remove pets, take everything off of the refrigerator, remove pet bedding and feeding dishes, etc *before she arrives.* The photographer will not move furniture, clear counters, etc. Incidentally, I always get better results from the shoot if I am present for it. This is one duty that I don't like to delegate to anyone else. And, I always ask the seller to leave, too. It is easier to work if the seller isn't present. The photographer sends me digital photos, optimized for both web and print, within 2 workdays.

By the way, don't schedule the photography until you have the listing.

Scheduling the photographer is a good incentive for the Seller to get that listing agreement signed and back into your hands quickly so that you can launch your marketing plan. Professional photography is an awesome carrot!

Celebrating your success,



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