

6 SIMPLE SYSTEMS TO TRANSFORM YOUR REAL ESTATE BUSINESS



SYSTEM 3: ATTRACT MORE BUYERS WITH BETTER LISTING PHOTOS

SELL LISTINGS FASTER AND MAKE MORE MONEY



WELCOME TO THE THIRD SYSTEM IN YOUR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY!

Property photos are the single most powerful tool a listing agent has to promote their listings and attract buyers.

Let that sink in for a second.

More powerful than what you say about the property, more powerful than the open houses you hold, even more powerful than the PRICE. Think about the way most people shop online; they're drawn in by the pictures first, they worry about price second.

According to the National Association of Realtors, 87% of homebuyers said that photos were the most helpful thing in deciding whether they wanted to investigate a home further. Since listing photos are so incredibly important, every real estate agent should have a plan to give each of their listings the absolute best photos possible.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Still not convinced? Here are some facts that you need to know about the real estate market, about professional photography, and how becoming your own listing photographer might give you a better ROI.

- **Real Estate Market:** Homes with high quality photographs sell, on average, 32% faster than those without.
- **Professional Photography:** The average rate for a professional real estate photographer is under \$300 per property. For a sale price of \$200,000, that's only 5% of your commission.
- **DIY Listing Photography:** Real estate agents can become their own listing photographer with less than \$2,000 worth of gear.

A photography strategy for your listings isn't just a good idea, it's good business. Whether you're hiring a professional photographer or taking your own photos, your clients will make more money, and their properties will sell faster. You'll get higher commissions and more referrals as a result.

WHAT WE'RE GOING TO COVER

- When to Hire a Pro vs When to DIY Your Listing Photos
- The Essential DIY Gear List
- Your Photography Strategy: The Perfect Shot List and 3 Other Must Dos
- Your iPhone as a Photography Tool
- 9 Mistakes Listing Agent Photographers Make and 2 Strategies to Avoid Them

- **Extra Credit:** Using Drone Photography to Go The Extra Mile

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A 2017 or newer smartphone with a camera
- Access to a computer for post production
- Budget for camera gear (optional)

**Let's get
started!**



When To Hire a Professional Photographer vs When To Take Your Own Photos

Deciding whether you're going to tackle listing photography yourself or hire a full time professional is the first step in determining your strategy. At first blush, many real estate agents think that they can take their own photos, but after getting into the process a little, they realize there's more to it than they thought.

To aid in your decision making, we've written a helpful quiz to nudge you in the right direction. Let's start by answering the following questions:

How much money do you have budgeted for the marketing of each individual listing you put on the market?

- 1) Nothing at all
- 2) \$100 - \$200
- 3) \$200 - \$300
- 4) \$300 - \$400
- 5) More than \$400



How familiar are you with photography gear and concepts?

- 1) I own a full frame camera with multiple lenses and shoot regularly
- 2) I'm familiar with the terms aperture, shutter speed and ISO
- 3) I own a camera I like to shoot with from time to time
- 4) I like to take pictures with my phone occasionally
- 5) Not familiar at all

What is the adoption rate of professional photography in your market?

- 1) Most listings are shot with an iPhone
- 2) Only the high-end luxury listings in my area use professional photos
- 3) Some listings have professional grade photos, but most of the properties my listings compete with do not
- 4) Most of the listings that are / will be competitors with my listing use professional photos
- 5) Nearly everyone is using a professional photographer for almost every listing

On average, how many listings of yours will close in a calendar year?

- 1) 5 or fewer
- 2) 5 - 10
- 3) 10 - 15
- 4) 15 - 20
- 5) 20 or more

Which of the following best describes how busy you feel during a normal work week?

- 1) I've got all sorts of free time on my hands
- 2) Business is growing, but I generally have at least a couple hours of flex time each day
- 3) I'm pretty well scheduled throughout the day, but can usually have free time during the week for new or unexpected appointments
- 4) My schedule is jammed; if you want an appointment with me, you need to give me a week's notice
- 5) I literally have no free time this month, talk to my assistant about getting on my calendar for next month

OK, look back at your answers and total up their corresponding numbers to get your score:

Total Score of 1 - 8: You're the perfect real estate agent / listing photographer duo. Chances are you already know something about photography and you've got at least a little flexibility in your schedule.

Total Score of 9 - 17: You should be shooting some of your listings and hiring a pro for others. You've probably got a pretty busy schedule, but you've also got a marketing budget for each of your listings, so when you don't have the time or energy to shoot the photos yourself, farming this task out to a pro is a must.

Total Score of 18 - 25: You've got a lot on your plate and most likely not the time and energy to devote to giving listing photography the attention it deserves. Chances are you're in a relatively competitive space where lack of quality photos is going to be noticeable amongst your competition, so **the best strategy is to consistently hire a pro.**

5 Questions to Ask to Find the Right Real Estate Photographer

Hiring a real estate photographer is supposed to relieve stress from your workflow, not add to it. There is typically no shortage of people calling themselves “photographers,” so cut through the noise and get the right person for your needs by asking the following questions:

1. May I see your portfolio?

The first indicator that the person you’re speaking with isn’t a bonafide professional is that they don’t have readily shareable examples of their work to show to potential clients. A photographer is only as valuable to



you as the quality of their photos, so before you consider a photographer, ask to see their work. If they don’t have any to show you or you aren’t impressed with what they have to offer, move on.

2. What is your typical workflow process for a real estate shoot?

Making sure you're on the same page as your photographer when it comes to how the work is done is a must. When speaking to a photographer about their process, make sure to ask about the following:

- Do you expect me to be on site when you're shooting a property?
- What is your general turnaround time for images?
- How can we work together to make sure the needs of my marketing strategy can be fulfilled with these photos?
- Do you want any contact with the property owner prior to the shoot?

Make sure you set expectations for how you want work to be done so there's no confusion later.

3. What are your rates and are you willing to negotiate a multi-property discount?

When you find a photographer you like and work well with, chances are you'll use them for multiple listings. This is a win-win, as you have locked down a dependable vendor that will deliver you the results you need on a consistent basis, and the photographer has secured more work moving forward. Just like anything you buy, a bulk discount is a good thing to ask for. Make sure you've got a crystal clear understanding of exactly what your photographer's rates are, and what discount they're willing to offer you if you commit to shooting multiple properties.

4. What sort of contract do you require?

Real estate photographer contracts don't just benefit the photographer, they benefit you as well. This commits them to you for whatever length of service you've agreed upon, one less thing you have to check off your list for future listings. The terms of the contract are important, so make sure you review them with your photographer line by line, specifically when it comes to who owns the rights to the photographs being taken.

Oftentimes, photographers aim to retain usage rights for any photos they take, but in the case of real estate photography, many homeowners don't want interior photos of their home ending up in other work the photographer may do. Find out exactly what rights your photographer plans on retaining and negotiate a deal that you feel comfortable with.

5. What sort of professional insurance do you carry?

Whenever a professional is working inside someone's home, insurance to cover damage, mishap, or injury is a must since most homeowner's insurance doesn't cover incidents related to professional services.

Without professional insurance, an accident in the home that results in property damage or personal injury could result in a lawsuit that would inevitably involve you as the real estate agent as well, so make sure your photographer is properly insured.

HIRING A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER: FINAL THOUGHTS

Be weary of photographers who own all the right gear but don't have much real estate shooting experience. Also, if your project is going to be farmed out to assistants, you should be having these conversations with the actual person who will be photographing your properties, so don't be satisfied just to speak to management.

Once you have answers to the above questions that you're satisfied with, you've found the right photographer for you. The task may seem arduous at first, but remember, once you've found a professional who can deliver what you want, for a price you're happy with, and in a timeframe you're satisfied with, you can stick with that person and work with them every time, so it pays to make the investment of time and energy up front.

Don't forget, just like in all things real estate, your interaction with your photographer is a *relationship* you want to maintain. Check in with them regularly, make sure they feel in the loop with your expectations, send them a card around the holidays, make them feel like a valued member of your team. They are the keepers of the most important component of your property marketing strategy, so keeping that relationship positive and growing ensures continued successful delivery of your listing photos.





Becoming Your Own Listing Photographer: Your Must-Have Gear List

If you're going to shoot photos worthy of the home you're listing for sale, you're going to need some gear. Just like in all tech fields, there are endless options (and prices) for each component of our list.

Here's our gear list with products that are a great compromise between quality and affordability:



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