Inside Engel & Völkers’ virtual reality theater for home tours

The moment I put on the Oculus Rift headset, I felt like I was inside one of Engel & Völkers’ listings. It only took a few seconds to master and then I was free to roam the house, admiring the tray ceilings in the dining room, wandering into the cozy den, ascending the stairs and meandering through each of the spacious bedrooms. All of this unfolded in the virtual reality “theater” located within real estate franchisor Engel & Völkers’ downtown Minneapolis office. In July, the agency was pondering what to do with a windowless space when inspiration struck -- it would make the perfect spot for potential buyers to grab a pair of goggles and vet as many as 30 homes in a matter of hours. With reclining arm chairs and special lighting (everything but the popcorn), the VR theater could also bring family and friends along for the experience by projecting the view from inside the headset onto a 100-inch big screen. VR's allure: Convenience, speed and marketing ...

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