Show apartments, earn cash on the fly with Showdigs app

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Showdigs is an on-demand showing service for agents to show rentals on behalf of property managers and landlords.

Platforms: Browser; app
Ideal for: New agents; agents looking for new leads; agents needing supplemental income

Top selling points

- Immediate payment
- Provides free fair housing refresher
- 30-minute max showing commitment
- Provides all information on prospective units
- Paid regardless of lease being signed

Top concerns

Agent safety is always the issue when meeting new people at properties. The app includes a panic button, 30-minute follow-up and mobile phone identity verification of lead.

What you should know

I have to admit: This app is pretty intriguing.

Agents who download the app and register with Showdigs can be called upon to show potential tenants available rentals. The hiring is done by local landlords or property management companies who may not have time to show a unit.

Most showings will be within a 10-minute drive from the agent at the time of notification. Thus, it uses geo-location marketing tools to seek and notify agents.

The target market for Showdigs is largely owner-operators and investors who manage a lot of separate units in disparate locations, and small to mid-size, full-time property management companies. It’s obviously not a solution for on-site managers and institutional entities who own large, Class-A apartment communities.

Zillow is, to date, the largest renter lead source for customers of Showdigs.

When wanting to show a unit, the property manager or landlord views a map with branded agent pins that are near their properties.

Provided the agent is fully vetted and licensed, selecting them will send a “dossier” of the property that includes images, location notes and any highlights that would be pertinent. It would help to arrive a few minutes before the showing. Renters are notified that they will be meeting a “licensed real estate professional” and are asked to complete a short basic survey regarding agent performance.

They also need to ensure they're the right fit for the unit, which Showdigs does by sending them a text with a breakdown of leasing requirements, such as minimum credit score, exact monthly costs, fees, and any other standard high-level clauses, such as pets and smoking.

After the showing, another text is sent to the lead with an application link and the agent feedback form.

Agents are paid as soon as they complete a short feedback form after each showing. Showdigs can direct deposit funds the same day.

Safety is addressed with an in-app panic button and an auto-alert if the showing is marked as complete within 30 minutes. Renters are also verified through their mobile number, which is used to send the texts that facilitate the activity.

The technology here is pretty straightforward stuff, standard gig-economy user experience. But it’s a clever way to engage market-savvy real estate agents.

For agents wanting to get to know a market or collect a list of renters who may one day be buyers, Showdigs is a pretty nifty option. There is simply no better way to understand a market than touring it and talking to the people who want to live in it.

The app pays agents roughly $35 per half-hour showing, and you still get paid if the tenant doesn’t show.

Showdigs launched in Seattle and has 200 agents registered and showing properties. It is also active in Portland, Oregon, Denver, and Tacoma, Washington. Markets in California and Texas are next on the list. The app was developed by Kobi Bensimon, an entrepreneur who sold his previous technology, ActiveBuilding, to RealPage in 2013.

I think the app could do a bit more to ensure the agent's safety. However, most agents are aware enough these days to listen to their gut and have their own measures in place should things turn sketchy.

Outside of that, Showdigs is a unique, simple way for agents to stay busy and earn their monthly coffee and gas budget.

Have a technology product you would like to discuss? Email Craig Rowe

Craig C. Rowe started in commercial real estate at the dawn of the dot-com boom, helping an array of commercial real estate companies fortify their online presence and analyze internal software decisions. He now helps agents with technology decisions and marketing through reviewing

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