True or false? TruPlace has what agents need to market homes during a pandemic

Have suggestions for products that you'd like to see reviewed by our real estate technology expert? Email Craig Rowe.

TruPlace is a virtual tour solution for real estate agents and brokerages

Platforms: Browser
Ideal For: Agents, teams and brokerages

Top selling points

- Multiple forms of tour available
- MLS-compliant tours
- Next-day turnaround
- Slideshow tour
- Use of exposure fusion on 3D tours

Top concerns

As of now, TruPlace is active in only 25 markets. But growth is expected quickly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What you should know

I found TruPlace's use of the term "Matterport killer" in our demo to be a tad much. In a lot of ways.

Not only did Matterport commercialize the 3D home tour, at no point in its history can I find evidence of it making a concerted effort to bully competitors out of the space. They're nothing if not innovators. TruPlace and all others in the virtual tour space should at the very least graciously recognize Matterport's role in their existence.

That said, it's my job to look at TruPlace's product, not criticize misplaced braggadocio. And what I saw was a very good, multi-offering home tour product that offers value and practicality.

Like the recently announced BoxBrownie Virtual Tour platform, TruPlace can turn around a completed tour in about 24 hours.

Agents can capture the content themselves for multiple tour types or farm it out to one of the TruPlace's national photographers.

Or, because of the coronavirus, TruPlace offers sellers — through the listing agent — a shot list and simple directions on how to photograph their home and upload the imagery. Nice.

Listing agents can choose to produce a Slideshow Video, *() which is a stitched-together progression of photos (in order of how a home would most logically be toured) with some sharp animated overlays of the home's basic features, a Google Earth fly-in and the slick use of live video on any televisions visible in the tour.*

While this is TruPlace's most minimally viable product, I find the 18-shot tour really compelling. It could impress as the opening to a landing page or be used in a listing presentation. It's well worth the sub-$100 price tag and would easily sway sellers.

The Hybrid Floor Plan tour is on-point, too. Using an interactive floorplan graphic, which the user can drag around the screen, homebuyers can scroll immediately to the room, floor or exterior they'd like to view.

TruFusion 3D Tours leverages the company's "fusion photography" tech to ensure the highest possible quality images.

The underlying tech has been around. It's similar to HDR, although best known as exposure fusion. PhotoPerfect is an app that uses it as well.

Still, this doesn't mean it isn't a very cool way to publish a great photo, and it's especially innovative when applied to 3D tours. BoxBrownie does something similar as well.

TruPlace TruFusion 3D from TruPlace on Vimeo.

TruFusion eliminates the interference of bright exterior sun blasting through windows as the camera pans a room. The slower capture (longer exposure period) can intensify the time such bright light is allowed in an image. This is why it's so important to minimize it with something like exposure fusion.

A carousel of room-by-room panoramas can be parked at the bottom of full 3D tours for quick

navigation or single-room look-ins. And tours start with a exterior surround view, as if the viewer is positioned at the front door.

TruPlace also offers Walkthrough Videos, which are self-explanatory, but nonetheless effective ways to get a good understanding of an interior. Like the slideshows, they're filmed in the most logical way to visit a home. It's recommended the photographer have a gimbal (a stability/camera steadying device) to ensure a watchable final product.

TruPlace Walkthrough Video from TruPlace Video on Vimeo.

All TruPlace products are published with unique URLs, and any video can be made MLS-ready via Vimeo or branded for YouTube.

Like Matterport and other competitors, TruPlace offers a large menu of rich real estate photography content, including aerial footage, virtual staging and twilight edits. They have deep library of rental property services, too.

Overall, the range of products here make TruPlace an excellent option for agents looking to leap into the world of virtual open houses.

As a show of good corporate faith, TruPlace is currently offering its network of photographers hand sanitizer and gloves for those markets where it's still okay to travel to a vacant home.

The company is also publishing a growing list of policies and procedures for conducting business during the pandemic, and providing sellers with a shot list when a DIY-tour is called for.

TruPlace knows what real estate agents need, whether in or out of the grip of a business-crushing pandemic. They offer a hearty menu of creative, smart photography products, and I see no reason why they won't become a tenured player in this segment.

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 software and tech for Inman. He lives near Lake Tahoe in the northern Sierra Nevada of California.

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