



TRAINING TIP OF THE WEEK

Worst Offenses in Virtual Staging

You can make any listing picture-perfect with virtual staging tools, which can do everything from manipulating the appearance of skies in photos to making empty properties look like modern spaces with fancy fixtures. But there is such a thing as going TOO FAR... and it could land you in hot water.

When virtual staging changes listing photos drastically from their original appearance, it can be misleading and give buyers a false impression of a property.

MISREPRESENTATION

Make sure you're not tweaking listing photos for the sake of beauty in a way that makes them an inaccurate representation of a property. One example could be an exterior photo of a home that was taken in daylight but manipulated to look like it was taken at dusk. Such an action is common and not necessarily misleading. However, in this scenario, the photo showed the sun setting behind the home – yet the property isn't facing west. Buyers are seeing this, and planning entertaining in that space at sunset.

FIXTURES REMOVED OR ADDED

The removal of items is a common photo enhancement, intended to make countertops or bookshelves appear decluttered, for example. But sometimes it can go too far. Do not remove anything that is materially attached to the property. Likewise, don't add any "fixtures" that could be understood to be included in the same of the home, when really, they aren't.

WRONG MEASUREMENTS

Be careful not to misrepresent room dimensions when virtually staging a property – perspective has to be there. One example of this would be adding a 5-seat long sectional sofa to an empty family room, when in reality, a that sofa would never truly fit in that space.

Potential misrepresentation shouldn't stop practitioners from editing their property photos. In fact, it is part of an agent's responsibility to present a property in the best light. One common example when editing is most needed? When interior photos fail to show what's outside the window. Photo editing tools are often necessary to make the view outside a window clearer. Another example would be virtually staging a vacant home with furniture, showing potential buyers the possibilities of the interior. If complying with the suggestions above, also stating in the property description that the home has been "virtually staged," you'll avoid misleading potential purchasers.

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