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Snapchat + real estate – worth the investment? – HageyMedia

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7-8 minutes

Real estate agent Brian Tran (Snapchat ID: “[drurock](#)“) walked into Oracle Arena in his native Oakland, California on Friday, May 27 to cheer on his beloved Golden State Warriors (via a live video feed) as they battled the Cleveland Cavaliers in game 6 of the NBA Finals.

The Warriors lost, but not all was for naught. [The 24-year-old San Francisco agent](#) ran into a number of Oakland friends he hadn’t connected with in years, many of whom said they followed his real estate exploits on Snapchat.

“We see you going through these \$5 million dollar homes, crazy!” Local boy gone big.

Snapchat is everywhere you look nowadays. It’s a strange, exciting, rapidly changing platform and real estate’s jumping in with two feet, and also grappling with its utility.

Tran’s Oracle experience illustrates the fast-growing social media platform’s perhaps greatest real estate promise: cementing individual, genuine style while reminding contacts

of your career.

But is it worth it?

Snapchat users create photos and videos, aka “snaps,” which string together into one “Story.” Each snap disappears 24 hours after creation. Other users can watch stories of those they follow. (This Wednesday, July 6, Snapchat introduced “Memories,” which allows users to save snaps for future use. See video describing it [here](#).)

Donating brain power to construct video stories on Snapchat, however elegant the platform presents them (with full screen photos and video), drains from the limited energy reservoir we all draw from.

Snapchat stats:

1 million snaps created everyday

Over 150 million daily active users. For those of us who watch HBO’s “Silicon Valley,” we know how significant that number is. This puts it above Twitter’s estimated 110 million DAUs, a number used by [Bloomberg who averaged analysts’ estimates](#).

41% of all U.S. 18-to-34-year-olds engage with Snapchat on any given day, a demo and engagement that makes marketers drool.

I debated writing about Snapchat. Its heat feels a little unfounded, excitement flaming far beyond utility.

But it’s drawing tons of users and engagement, which can’t be ignored by any marketer. The firm will rake in between

\$250 and \$350 million in revenue this year, according to TechCrunch, which got access to an investor presentation.

Despite the lack of clarity around utility, Snapchat offers arguably the most unvarnished, most intimate way for brands and agents to expose style, character, their day-to-day life. It no doubt fosters genuine and authentic content — key ingredients of the relationship glue that's as valuable as gold in real estate.

Snapchat takeaways:

It's not for everyone. The platform's best for those who have followings on other digital platforms because it's hard to grow followers from within.

Snapchat stories of spectacular real estate listings perform well.

As with other social media platforms, over-posting is counterproductive. An average of three to four posts per day is fine.

As on other social media platforms, it's good include a mix of content. More than anything, however, be authentic.

Snapchat's ephemeral nature makes it a different platform than Facebook and Twitter. Posts on the legacy platforms are everlasting, more polished, and, therefore, can be a bit staid.

Snapchat's disappearing content encourages raw, candid, genuine content, Tran said. "It allows you to voice who you are in real estate."

Brands + agents

Tran hangs his license with the innovative San Francisco brokerage Climb Real Estate (Snapchat ID: “[climbsf](#)”), which recently concluded a month-long study of Snapchat’s utility in June, both for the firm and for its agents.

The firm’s new communication director Graham Carlson, 26, oversaw the project and [blogged about it](#), in four parts.

Tran was one of five Climb agents who participated in the firm’s experiment.

“We’re trying to decide whether Snapchat’s worth it,” Carlson told me.

Carlson likes that Snapchat’s free and relatively easy to use, two prerequisites for any busy professional, in particular agents. In addition, the platform’s ability to expose genuine moments to followers sparked his feeling that it would be good for real estate.

Just 10 percent of Climb’s agents use Snapchat now, estimated Carlson. That’s likely by design. Millennials, the demo roughly encompassed by working age adults under 35 years old, typically have robust presences on other social media.

This helps overcome one of Snapchat’s challenges: growing followers. Users must drive engagement from other platforms, which is why you see so many Snapcodes (the QR Snapchat codes that allow users to add new friends with a photo) featured as brands’ and agents’ avatar photos on

Twitter and other platforms.

Climb will soon experiment with branding on Snapchat with custom, branded geofilters. With geofilters, advertisers — even smaller one — can create branded filters accessible to Snapchat users in a specific region.

Snapads, the ads that show up in Snapchat-produced live videos, and sponsored lenses, the face-tweaking image overlays on the platform, are currently available to advertisers with budgets in the hundreds of thousands of dollars (see Gatorade, Pepsi, etc.).

The art of genuine

Carson Sweezy (Snapchat ID: “[sweezyfbaby53](#)”), a 23-year-old [Washington, D.C. agent](#), has been using Snapchat since it launched four years ago when he was in college.

“My snapchat friends know two things, I cook and I am in real estate,” Sweezy said. He gets approximately 225 views per snap, he said.

His Snapchat stream is a subtle reminder to his followers that he’s in real estate, Sweezy said. “It takes the place of consistent, (and intrusive) email marketing campaigns.”

He’s worked with several friends who have watched his snaps, but otherwise haven’t engaged with in years, he said.

Sweezy’s favorite real estate agent Snapchatters: Silicon Valley agent Alex Wang (Snapchat ID: “[helloalexwang](#)” and Washington, D.C. agent Marian Rosaaen (Snapchat ID:

[“marianmrosaaen”](#)).

Wang, 38, is a volume snapper. His Snapchat M.O. centers on giving consumers an inside view into just what real estate agents do. Watching real estate reality TV can skew consumers’ perceptions, he said, and he uses Snapchat to show what good agents do.

“Consumers don’t realize the day to day of a real agent, hard work and grind, and how much value a good negotiator can bring to the table,” Wang said.

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[disclosure: Alex wang is a hageymedia client]