



When To Hire a Professional Photographer vs. When To Take Your Own Photos

Deciding whether you're going to tackle listing photography yourself or hire a full time professional is the first step in determining your strategy. At first blush, many real estate agents think that they can take their own photos, but after getting into the process a little, they realize there's more to it than they thought.

To aid in your decision making, we've written a helpful quiz to nudge you in the right direction. Let's start by answering the following questions:

How much money do you have budgeted for the marketing of each individual listing you put on the market?

- 1) Nothing at all
- 2) \$100 - \$200
- 3) \$200 - \$300
- 4) \$300 - \$400
- 5) More than \$400

How familiar are you with photography gear and concepts?

- 1) I own a full frame camera with multiple lenses and shoot regularly
- 2) I'm familiar with the terms aperture, shutter speed and ISO
- 3) I own a camera I like to shoot with from time to time
- 4) I like to take pictures with my phone occasionally
- 5) Not familiar at all

What is the adoption rate of professional photography in your market?

- 1) Most listings are shot with an iPhone
- 2) Only the high-end luxury listings in my area use professional photos
- 3) Some listings have professional grade photos, but most of the properties my listings compete with do not
- 4) Most of the listings that are / will be competitors with my listing use professional photos
- 5) Nearly everyone is using a professional photographer for almost every listing

On average, how many listings of yours will close in a calendar year?

- 1) 5 or fewer
- 2) 5 - 10
- 3) 10 - 15
- 4) 15 - 20
- 5) 20 or more

Which of the following best describes how busy you feel during a normal work week?

- 1) I've got all sorts of free time on my hands
- 2) Business is growing, but I generally have at least a couple hours of flex time each day
- 3) I'm pretty well scheduled throughout the day, but can usually have free time during the week for new or unexpected appointments
- 4) My schedule is jammed; if you want an appointment with me, you need to give me a week's notice
- 5) I literally have no free time this month, talk to my assistant about getting on my calendar for next month

OK, look back at your answers and total up their corresponding numbers to get your score:

Total Score of 1 - 8: You're the perfect real estate agent / listing photographer duo. Chances are you already know something about photography and you've got at least a little flexibility in your schedule.

Total Score of 9 - 17: You should be shooting some of your listings and hiring a pro for others. You've probably got a pretty busy schedule, but you've also got a marketing budget for each of your listings, so when you don't have the time or energy to shoot the photos yourself, farming this task out to a pro is a must.

Total Score of 18 - 25: You've got a lot on your plate and most likely not the time and energy to devote to giving listing photography the attention it deserves. Chances are you're in a relatively competitive space where lack of quality photos is going to be noticeable amongst your competition, so the best strategy is to consistently hire a pro.

