



Hearthstone Photography

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A Realtor's Narrative

This is the story of a listing. One in which you have had a part many times. Really, it is two narratives, although the first is somewhat vague because it comes in many versions.

Our story begins with you meeting a prospective seller who may be a previous client, a referral, a FSBO you are trying to convert, or whatever. Your objective is to win the listing and then sell the home quickly, as near the listing price as possible. But your first step is to win the listing. You probably discuss your marketing plan.

Marketing plans vary and each Realtor has his/her own. At some point, they all include MLS listing, brochures, direct mail campaigns, and open houses. Most of these involve photography or videography of one kind or another. Photographic imagery appears everywhere because it works. Almost all of it is done by professionals using professional equipment in skilled hands with plenty of experience. So, you need to demonstrate to your prospect that their home will be photographed professionally by an artist you know and trust – an artist with whom you have a working relationship. If you cannot do that for whatever reason, your chances of winning the listing are lower.

Now, on to the second narrative. You won the listing, initiated your marketing plan, and now the ball is in the buyer's court. Mr. and Mrs. Buyer usually start online. They choose the kind and general location of the home, a price range, size, rooms, and amenities; and begin to browse. They look through online images, be they stills, slide show, or video and start making choices. Their first choice is whether to spend more time examining the listing or pass it over and move on to the next one. You have to grab them right then!

What makes a browsing buyer *pass over* an online listing? It could be related to size, design, location, price, or something else over which you have no control. Or it could be the photography, over which you have *complete* control. Ideally, you want them to schedule a viewing. You want them to make a emotional connection with the property. While you cannot know what causes the connection – nor can you force it – you can reduce the risk of turning buyers off. But how?

Here is my proposed list of turn-offs based on talking with many, many people:

- Bad image quality due to lighting, composition, distortion, etc.
- Bad composition or photographing the wrong things.
- Difficulty in using or navigating imagery.
- Taking too long to convey the message (esp. videography).
- Images out of order.
- Images fail to tell a story about the property.

Most effective advertising is based on first quality, still images. Hard to argue with success! Now tell me what you think. Email me at ron@hearthstone.photo .