Learn These 3 Insider Secrets and Platforms to Elevate Your Virtual Tour Strategy

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As the founder of one of the country’s fastest-growing 3D Virtual Tour companies, I’ve dedicated a lot of time to testing all of the leading virtual tour platforms available. There are hundreds of these 3D software on the market, though only a few can produce the quality content needed for my clients.

There are many factors to consider when choosing a virtual tour software for your business, including the price, usability and quality. Sometimes, certain kinds of locations need special features only available on one platform. This is why, as one of the largest virtual tour companies in the US, we need to utilize all of these platforms.

Today, I will go over my top 3 virtual tour platforms. The software I will list today is not only the best of the best but is the software we use for 99% of our tours.

Matterport

Odds are, if you are into virtual tours, you have seen a Matterport before. You have probably seen hundreds of Matterports already. This is because Matterport is the most popular Virtual Tour platform of all time and for good reasons.

Matterports are instantly recognizable by the fully 3

Dimensional “Dollhouse” shown when you first load the tour. This feature is often absent from many other platforms; when it isn’t, Matterport still creates these the best. The way Matterport works is a full 3D scan is made in various locations of a property, which are then automatically stitched together by the software to create one large to-scale render with 99% accurate measurements.

Matterports are useful for creating floor plans easily, which is useful in the real estate market. Real Estate agents use Matterports most often due to all of these features, the dollhouse, the floor plans and the realistic rendering. This saves them time and attracts more buyers because essentially anyone can tour the property for free as if they were there in person. This is efficient for agents and often leads to more calls, property tours and eventually a sale because the potential buyers already know exactly what the interior looks like before they ever contact the agent.

If you are not a real estate agent, some of these premium features might not be necessary for the tour you need, especially with the high cost of these Matterport scans. The Matterport Pro 2 costs a couple thousand dollars alone, and this does not include the software or the web hosting.

If you have a large virtual tour company, you can expect to pay as much as $1,400 a month to host only up to 500 tours at once. For this reason, we like to use other tours for other scenarios, which can be cheaper and benefit the client.

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Kuula

One of the most groundbreaking virtual tour platforms you probably haven’t heard about is Kuula. Released in 2016, Kuula has worked its way up to be among the top platforms fairly quickly. The standout feature of Kuula is that virtual tours

can be made of properties and locations that do not exist yet. This is especially useful for contractors or building planners to create a fully explorable environment for a building still under construction. These 3D models look very realistic and are commonly confused with real images.

Along with this feature, Kuula can do everything a standard virtual tour platform can do. Kuula is known for its fast-loading and mobile-friendly tours. These tours are helpful for real estate and local businesses because they are optimized to run quickly on smartphones. They might not be as detailed as Matterports, but the price of Kuula makes up for this.

For one, Kuula's software works flawlessly with any 360 camera on the market, so there are no high-priced cameras to cause any roadblocks for a new virtual tour business. The software and hosting are also extremely affordable. Kuula offers its software for free, with very few features locked behind a paywall, as well as some of the most inexpensive hosting out of all platforms.

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Cloud Pano

My company works with all kinds of properties. Matterports are great for real estate listings and small businesses, and Kuula is essential for new construction projects; but when creating a tour for large areas, these platforms suffer. This is why, when we create a virtual tour for college campuses, resorts, or state parks, we use cloud pano.

Cloud Pano works best with large buildings, facilities or outdoor areas. Technically, a Matterport is possible for large buildings, but to traverse the virtual environments, you will have to click through every pano area taken by the camera. Imagine a very long hallway. With Matterport, you will have to basically "click" your way down the hall, which can take a

long time. If the building is a resort or a factory, it could be impossible to see everything the location offers in a reasonable amount of time.

One drawback to CloudPano is that the tours need to be stitched together by hand, which, compared to Matterport, can take a lot of time. But the benefit to stitching yourself is you get to create the best tour path for the property and include or cut out specific areas. This allows my company to charge a bit more for our work because there is a lot more of a creative aspect to these tours, where expert experience provides a better result. CloudPanos are also significantly cheaper to host than Matterports, which is why it is my favorite tour platform for my business.

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The future

Virtual tours have only just started to take traction within the last few years. I believe most people still do not know about their existence unless they are business owners or in real estate. For this reason, I think the virtual tour industry will see massive growth over the next few years in terms of user engagement and tech innovations. For now, these three platforms are the best on the market for my company. However, I see this changing very soon as 3D software and 360 cameras continue to advance and the popularity of consumer VR headsets grows. I am excited to see where these platforms go in the next five years.

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