

Q&A with CENTURY 21 Arizona Foothills

A look at how Lifesize video conferencing is helping to boost CENTURY 21's reputation within the real estate industry



Real estate agents are known as exceptional communicators. The gifts of networking and building relationships are absolutely essential in an industry where connections are key. In addition, real estate professionals have been primary beneficiaries in mobile and web-based platform innovations, especially as location-based technologies and electronic signatures have drastically sped up the pace of deal making.

That said, it's only natural that agents would take to high quality video conferencing as a means of collaborating and working more efficiently. We spoke to Floyd Scott, President of CENTURY 21 Arizona Foothills, to hear about how Lifesize is helping transform the way agents connect with clients and one another.

What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in the real estate market over the past five years?

Technology, by far. Now transactions are much more fluid—especially when it comes to texting and e-signatures. Our clients have come to expect a frictionless experience. And even though many of our agents are over 55 years old and have been in the business for years, they're always eager to adopt new technologies that help them succeed.

How did Century 21 decide to implement video conferencing?

We're a fairly large organization with seven offices spanning the greater Phoenix area, all of which are about 90 minutes apart from one another. We're using video conferencing for internal communications, such as management and staff meetings, and for agent training sessions. In the past, agents would have to drive to attend trainings. These trips consumed at least four hours in their workday, all to attend a one-hour class. After testing video conferencing, we decided to install systems in every location where we do business.

What are your favorite Lifesize features?

To give one example, the North Scottsdale office has a very successful agent who uses video conferencing to train agents and showcase her talent to multiple branches. She utilizes the split-screen feature during PowerPoint presentations to show off some of the techniques she's using. We share these presentations with two other offices of about 40 people, spread throughout the North Scottsdale, East Valley and Ahwatukee area. What would have taken 40 hours of drive time for all those people to get to one location was reduced to a few minutes with video conferencing.

We look at Lifesize and think, "Gee, this is simple to use." We tried web conferencing in the past, and that felt more like staring at a small screen without quality video or sound. Web conferencing just didn't give us the level of professionalism we wanted, whereas with Lifesize, people feel like they are actually in the same room.

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What’s been your biggest surprise so far using Lifesize?

How easy it is to use, really. Using it from my laptop, it’s like bing-bing-bing: turn it on, dial a number and you’re connected.

Overall, how would you describe the impact Lifesize has made on Century 21?

Professionally, agents who stay up to date with technology are well regarded by their peers. Agents genuinely love to talk and meet other people, whether they’re potential clients or other agents in our network. If they’re an hour away, they don’t really have the time to drive that distance just to talk. Lifesize allows them to have these conversations.

When you’re part of a bigger company with multiple offices, such as our Century 21 Dallas operation with over 20 offices, you inevitably run into the issue of driving from office to office. When I was at a Century 21 branch in Washington, DC, we went out to some of their offices, and it was a 70 minute drive there and another 70 minutes back. I asked the manager how often the management team visits these offices, and he said once a year at most. If they had Lifesize, they could sit in a room, talk to those agents and build a better rapport in minutes.

Earlier you suggested that video conferencing gives Century 21 a competitive advantage when it comes to attracting and retaining agents. Can you talk more about that?

Yes, there is a lot of competition. As the economy improves, there are more and more quality agents joining the profession. They can once again start making a good living, so it has caused an influx of great people. Lifesize is one of those things that enhances our general appeal to agents looking for a brokerage.

How has video conferencing changed your approach to employee training and internal communications?

Before Lifesize, managers facilitated most of our training. Now, we conduct more agent-to-agent trainings. I used to feel like I was imposing by asking an agent to visit another office and do a presentation because it took away half of their day. Now I don’t hesitate. In this manner, when it comes to our reputation in the industry, video conferencing definitely helps enrich and boost our standing.

Learn more

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