



Making a Virtual Tour Of Your Kennel

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A picture is still worth a thousand words. Sadly, this is the sort of picture that many people now associate with pet breeding facilities:



One way to change the image in their minds is to give them NEW images. Images of clean, cozy, bright, happy places where dogs are bred. If your facilities are not lovely to look at, you won't benefit from this marketing idea. But if you are proud of your beautiful facilities, offering a virtual tour to prospective customers will definitely help put them at ease.

Families buying pets don't want to unwittingly support a sub-standard operation. Buyers today want transparency. No dark secrets. The technology exists to give them what they want, and with only basic computer skills. So let's get started...



Step One: Beautify

Before you get the camera out, get everything in top-notch shape.

- Scrub everything thoroughly
- Upgrade your décor
- Groom all the animals
- Wash windows
- Repair/replace anything broken or worn
- Get rid of clutter and excess furniture/tools
- *Take a few test photos and study them on your computer screen... what more could you do to make a great first impression?*

Step Two: Plan Your Shots

- Write down a master list of all the images you would like to have in your tour.
- Next to each item in the master list, write what angle would be best to shoot it from, and whether it would be best as a still photo or a video. For example, you might be able to get an overview of things with an overhead shot, but a floor-level close up would be best for a puppy sleeping on its mama.
- Finally, decide on an approximate order of the photos and video clips. Experts agree that your tour should begin and end with images that convey the FEELING you want the viewer to have about your facility. You definitely do NOT have to do a walk-thru, starting at the gate and passing thru each room. Think of the tour as more of a kaleidoscope of images from your facility that, when viewed all together, gives a good picture of what it looks like and what goes on there. You may want to group your images by activity, such as Feeding Time, Vetting Time, Play Time and so forth. Remember the tour is not just about the pens and the clean concrete. It's a promo video about your kennel operation in its entirety.

A Note on Length

- *How long should your tour be? The entire project should not exceed 5 minutes.*
- *3 or 4 minutes is more common.*
- *Individual video clips should not exceed 60 seconds.*
- *Each photo image should stay on the screen between 4 and 8 seconds (can stay longer with added effects like zoom).*
- *For example: a three minute tour with two 30-second videos, an opening page and a closing page, could then contain about 22-25 photos.*

Step Three: Photo Day

- Choose a sunny day. Open blinds and curtains.
- Add light from incandescent sources. (fluorescent lighting doesn't look good on video)
- Remove trash cans, get dishes out of the sink, put down toilet lids, etc.
- Do another mess-check: remove clutter, take down any bits of paper stuck here and there as signage, remove junk from the front of the fridge, tuck any dangling electric cords out of sight, remove dirty or worn throw rugs and doormats, remove feed and water dishes that are all chewed up, etc.
- Turn off fans, television, radio, phone ringers.
- Move vehicles out of sight.
- Open doors between rooms for a more spacious look.
- If shooting video, *use a tripod*. Don't make your viewers ill with shaky handheld footage.
- *Set your camera(s) to the highest resolution possible and start shooting!*

Step Four: Putting it All Together

- Preview everything you shot and select only the best views
- Take the photos into a photo editor and apply cropping, enhancing, effects and corrections as you see fit.
- Transfer your best images and video clips into Windows Movie Maker (a free utility, [get it here](#)) or similar editing/compiling program of your choice. Most computers come with one, many are available for free on the internet. If you don't have time to learn how to use Movie Maker, you can probably find a friend or relative that is handy with the program.
- In Movie Maker (or similar program), add titles, effects, a 'contact us' screen, and narration or music. You can rearrange and preview over and over again until it flows just right, then you're done!

A Note on Text and Narration

Text and spoken commentary are added in Movie Maker and should be carefully scripted, clear and informative. Don't just state what is obvious from the picture. This is your opportunity to tell them about what they can't see on the tour ... the quality of your pet foods, your vetting routines, etc. If you don't like the sound of your voice, are unable to sound professional or just don't know what to say, use a small amount of text on the images and add a music track instead (both done in Movie Maker). If you narrate, remember to smile while speaking – the smile actually does resonate in your voice.

Step Five: Marketing with your Virtual Tour

- Upload it to YouTube for public viewing
- Put the YouTube link in all of your emails as part of your signature
- Embed it in your website
- Get a QR code for the video link ([get it free here](#))
- Put the QR code on your business cards
- Put the QR code in your advertisements
- At events, display the QR code for passers-by to view your tour on their phones, and run the tour on a laptop or screen for those who can sit a minute and visit.

If you're proud of your handiwork, please share it with us too!
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Related Links

[Using Movie Maker for virtual tours](#)

[Picasa Slideshow option \(instructional video\)](#)

[An old-fashioned tour \(scrolling thru photos and text\)](#)

Some Virtual Tour Examples

Some bad, some better. We'll let you be the judge! Compare them to the advice in our guide... then make yours the best!

[Umpqua Valley Kennels Tour - French Bulldogs, Chihuahuas, Frenchbos!](#)

[Doberman Kennel Betelges virtual tour](#)

[Highest Virtual Tour of whelping facility](#)

[BYD Ranch and Kennel Tour video](#)