



24/7 ONLINE OFFICE

Virtual Realty

From his home office, this tech-savvy broker built a brokerage model that offers 24/7 online access.

“Most of my clients [international investors and buyers] come from the wealth management departments of local private banks,” says Carlos Rojas, broker-owner of Miami Riches in Miami. “You’ve got to be doing something seriously different [to get bank referrals].”

For Rojas, that something different is a brokerage model that parallels banking: Give customers everything they need online to make your company user friendly and indispensable.

“Controlling the information doesn’t work anymore,” says Rojas, a former consultant for Microsoft. His virtual company is two websites—one to serve shoppers and another to serve

customers—that free his six sales associates, all of whom work from home, to build business.

Aside from his hardware, software and programming time, Rojas spends \$430 a year for website hosting and a security certificate.

Here’s how he built his virtual brokerage.

1. Build a robust shoppers’ website

Rojas’ website—*miamiriches.com*—is all about finding and comparing properties for sale or rent. “Most [consumers] do research online, so you have to empower [them] to analyze and collect all the data,” says Rojas. When they’re ready, he says, they’ll come to the real estate professional.

To make his simple site robust, Rojas gets daily IDX feeds of MLS active sales and rentals and puts them into his own database. Then he links the data to search selections on the website. “When people go to a website to see [listings], most of them already know the area and the actual development. So, I create a list [of links] based on [what types of properties visitors are looking at].” Of course, this is easy for Rojas to do because of his tech background, but other brokers can hire webmasters to do these tasks.

2. Build a real estate management site

When prospects become customers, they get a secure, private account at his other website, *realmanager.net*.

For buying and selling transactions, *realmanager.net* was built to be secure and easy for collaboration, according to Rojas. “[It] was crucial to have all the information online accessible to everyone—contracts in electronic format, contacts, forms—so that the agent, client, title company and mortgage broker have access,” says Rojas. “I associate clients with agents in the back end of *realmanager.net* so each party has a distinct login and access only to appropriate documents.”

3. Add rental tools

To hold on to customers, Rojas added property management functions.

Because Rojas and his agents work exclusively with foreign customers, his rental management tools set his brokerage apart. “I had three referrals in one week as a result of the [property management] tool. My clients told their friends, ‘Look how this guy is doing business,’” he says.

The tools allow owners to order and monitor repairs, manage vacancies and agreements, see their income and expenses, and watch the rental market and inventory. From a brokerage cost viewpoint, Rojas says, a traditional brokerage may hire a new assistant for every 20 to 25 properties it acquires. “Using this tool, [you’d need] one assistant, part time, entering the data [for 75 properties].”



Carlos Rojas
Miami Riches
Miami