



PlanetHome AG, Munich

ADRENALINE C(L)ICK FOR THE REALTY BUSINESS

Uniserv creates the basis for viewing realty listings on the Internet / Correct addresses are the key in Germany and Austria

The real estate service provider PlanetHome AG checks the addresses of the objects listed for sale online with software from Uniserv. The highlight: the validated addresses are the key to assigning geocoordinates and statistical market information to the listed objects. Along with the offered object-relevant video street tours, city maps and tours of interiors, every prospective buyer has the opportunity to get to know the real estate he or she is interested in online. The prospective buyer can analyze everything extensively on screen and at the same time become acquainted with the surrounding infrastructure. With this unique quality offer, PlanetHome has very rapidly established itself as a premier real estate portal.

For those responsible at PlanetHome AG, it was clear from the beginning that in the real estate market the company should play an offensive role, not a defensive one. Accordingly, achievement standards were set very high. Since it is not possible to sell real estate using the Internet exclusively, success can only be attained by effectively linking together the online world with the offline world.



Ralf Cymanek, managing director of PlanetHome AG and Heidrun Rank, business development: "Without a correct address validation system, the many competitive advantages which make PlanetHome stand out from the competition would not have been possible!"

Hence, PlanetHome is the first provider of realty services to use a two-track system for offering real estate with both virtual online listings and agents providing realty services in the respective city or area. One of the decisive factors for the quality of the online sector of the business is the use of professional address management. Only objects with impeccably correct postal addresses enable the precise augmentation of additional data such as geographical coordinates, city maps, statistical information, video street tours and pictures of interiors.

The thus created possibility of pre-viewing the desired real estate listing and its surroundings virtually on the Internet before making an appointment for a "real" viewing at the location is what finally makes the great

difference to other realty service providers. "With this clear, transparent Internet presence - based on uniform, correct listing addresses - we are unequivocally the market leader as far as quality is concerned," declares Ralf Cymanek, managing director of PlanetHome AG.

Use of tried-and-tested solutions

Since the mother company HypoVereinsbank has been working successfully with programs by Uniserv for years, the management board of its subsidiary PlanetHome AG also decided on the tried-and-

tested products from Pforzheim. The package for Germany is comprised of the error-tolerant postal validation *post* and the two additional features geo-coordinates and micromarketing. The package for Austria contains the corresponding postal validation and likewise the additional geo-coordinate feature.

The licensed products run on a Sun Solaris platform. The Java standard J2EE provides the general direction. The entire environment is programmed on Java. An Oracle 8i™ database manages the original realty addresses as well as all additional



PlanetHome AG, Munich, a subsidiary of HypoVereinsbank AG, has established itself since its founding in 2000 as real estate service provider with three core areas of activity: brokerage and financing of residential real estate and numerous services ranging from object assessment to legal consultation. In doing so, the

company - with a business model unique until now for Germany - ties together the productivity advantages of the Internet with the personal service a realty agent in the locality provides. In the meantime with approximately 70 offices and about 120 realty agents, PlanetHome is one of the leading German real estate service providers. Parallel to that, the company operates the Internet portal www.planethome.com which was granted the award for the Best Consumer Website (European eCommerce Association).

This realty database encompasses approximately 70,000 objects. With virtual street tours, interior viewings and with social data about the

residential area, it is possible to gain a comprehensive impression right from one's own personal computer. Combined with personal service, the purchase and sale of real estate is simplified and accelerated significantly.

In the financing field, PlanetHome has likewise established itself due to an innovative online method.

Together with the Austrian subsidiary company, revenues of almost 15 million euros were earned in 2001, the first full business year. The number of employees in Germany and Austria amounted to almost 280 at the end of 2001.

data for video tours, viewings of interiors and map material. Ralf Cymanek: "Due to the open architecture of the Uniserv products, integration into our data processing environment could be realized easily and quickly!"

Address is the linchpin

When private owners or professional realtors place their listings in the real estate portal www.planethome.com, the object addresses are first put through an error-tolerant check with postal validation software, before they and with that the realty object are included in the listing portfolio of PlanetHome. That ensures that all addresses are correct and in a homogeneous format – the essential requirement for the designated assignment of additional data to a realty listing and thus for the quality leadership of PlanetHome. "That is why in our marketplace we consequently place such central importance on homogeneous address management supported by Uniserv," says Mr. Cymanek, commenting on the strategy.

First online, then offline

If a prospective buyer would like to look at the realty listing of his choice more closely online, this can be done very easily on the basis of the validated object address. On demand, running in the background of the address, the corresponding geo-coordinates are first assigned to the object location with geographical longitude and latitude in WGS 84 format. Then, linking to this WGS 84 format are additional relevant data for e.g. video street tours, map material and interior viewings of the building or apartment. Parallel to that, the system supplements the listing with secondary statistical data, including socio-demographic information among other things. For instance, the prospective buyer can learn about the age structure of the population in the city or district in which the realty object is located. In this way, whenever you wish, different objects can be previewed in detail conveniently from your own home. That saves time and above all costs. Thus, the agents in the realty offices handling the listing only need to be active when the intention to buy – based on the Internet previewing – is already very concrete.

"The possibility of previewing the desired object on the Internet is a great advantage for PlanetHome and contributes considerably to our success," summarizes Heidrun Rank, active in business development for PlanetHome.

Summation

Ralf Cymanek, managing director of PlanetHome AG: "We started competing on the market with the claim of having the best-quality marketplace. That is especially demonstrated in our transparent Internet offering, which is one component of our online-offline strategy. Here we provide significantly more information about our realty listings than in other portals. Even with respect to the number of listings we showcase, we have firmly established ourselves in the top group. To a not inconsiderable extent, this is due to the addresses validated by Uniserv software, which are the central element of our marketplace."

Uniserv, Pforzheim



- Founded 1969
- Leading provider of address management software
- Product portfolio: international, Web-capable, platform-independent, sector-neutral
- Areas of use for the software, in particular: CRM, e-commerce, 1:1 marketing, ERP projects, call center activities, micromarketing, geocoding
- Benefit: ability to address customers in the most optimal way on the basis of validated address information

Additional information

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