

# THE REAL DEAL

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## We heard...

### Skype hype

*In a 24-7 brokerage world,  
Internet platform wins agents*

Facebook, Twitter and iPhone apps, move over. Skype is now infiltrating the city's brokerage world, transforming the way agents reach clients — and vice versa.

"It's hysterical because you're at home in your pajamas and it's like, 'ping!'" said Daniela Sassoun, a vice president of the Corcoran Group, of Skype's trademark alert that lets you know when someone wants to start a video chat. "That's the thing about teleconferencing: You have to be dressed up from the waist, at least."

Potential sartorial pratfalls aside, Sassoun and other brokers say the program, which allows you to make free video calls over the Internet, has helped business.

"Phone calls [to foreign clients] end up being really expensive because, literally, you can end up spending two hours on the phone with somebody," Sassoun said.

The industry took its time catching up to the Skype buzz — the program has been popular with the general public for years — but its appeal is clear, said Gea Elika, founder of Elika Associates.

"I think that the real estate industry is a trial-and-error



type with new technologies," Elika said. "It's part convenience, part gimmick.... The setback is being available 24-7." But that's the upside, too: no more "out of reach" clients.

Martin Newman, an agent with the Real Estate Group NY, helped assuage a nervous apartment owner at the Park Royal building at 23 West 73rd Street by arranging a Skype meeting between the owner and the future tenant, who was in Australia. The result? The owner leased his \$4,000-a-month unit.

David Innocenzi, an associate broker with the Heddings Property Group, said it probably helps that the program works on smart phones, given how much brokers use them, Innocenzi said. "It really follows you." **By Amy Tenner**