



How to generate trust with today's home buyer.



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It is Perfectly true that in today's fast-moving world, change is the only constant.

"People no longer need photographic film - they use digital cameras[bar]
Newspapers are under pressure as people turn to the internet for their information and doctors get second-guessed by their patients who have used Google to research their condition."

In the property world the times are also changing:

Homebuyers are younger and more savvy. First-time buyers and buyers in the 25-45 age group are starting to dominate the SA market.

"This internet generation of buyers typically research endlessly before making a buying decision. This is why property websites and demand for services such as home inspections are growing rapidly.

"The Google generation buys with their heads as well as with their hearts. These people are acutely aware of the power and accessibility of knowledge; they really hate making a mistake or feeling that they have been taken for a ride. For this reason the use of home inspectors in the South African property industry is expected to gather momentum.

This means that the estate agent needs to adapt to the changing profile of their buyers, or die.

Like the doctor facing a Google-informed patient, the estate agent is no longer automatically the "guru", but only one of several sources of information the buyer will rely on before making a decision.

In times past the agent could focus on selling the positive features of a house. Now the buyer wants to know more about the real cost of the property. He is interested in a comparative market analysis; wants information on rates, insurance premiums and crime statistics; and wants reassurance regarding the physical condition of the house.

He wants a home inspection report.

The main challenge for any agent today is to establish trust and credibility with his/her prospective buyer. The best way to build trust is for the estate agent to "get real", to be transparent and up-front and to communicate honestly all material information regarding the property the buyer may be interested in.

Openness breeds trust and trust breeds sales, so the agent needs to control the process of home inspection by being able to recommend a home inspection company which, while being thorough, professional and objective, is not a negative, destructive, deal-killing "nit-picker".

In my next article, I will look at how estate agents use the growing swing towards home inspections and how you can turn a potential negative into a sales advantage.

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