

Are show houses still relevant in the sale of property?

Prior to the digital age, there were only two ways in which an agent could market a property - by advertising in the local newspaper and hosting show houses on Sunday afternoons. Now, property professionals have several additional marketing tools at their disposal and without these, the industry would have ground to a halt during the pandemic as agents were forced to abandon personal viewings altogether.



Source: Gallo/Getty

Despite this, Cobus Odendaal, CEO of Lew Geffen Sotheby's International Realty in Johannesburg and Randburg, believes that show houses are still very relevant in the sale of property.

"By necessity, virtual tours were honed during lockdown to enable us to keep servicing our clients and they were well-received by the public as an alternative for viewing properties during the lockdown period.

"And they will continue to be useful in the marketing of property, but just as an add-on to existing protocol because the fact remains that the majority of home buyers - by some margin - still rely on the opportunity to physically visit a house to get a 'feel' of the home before they commit to buying.

"And show houses are also the best way to limit the inconvenience for sellers as it can be stressful and challenging to juggle work and family with having to keep the house pristine and have people traipsing through the house at dinner time."



Why you might be struggling to sell your property

Samuel Seeff 9 Jun 2022



Show house attendance increasing

Claude McKirby and Arnold Maritz, co-principals for the group in Cape Town's Southern Suburbs, agree, noting that since

lockdown restrictions ended, show house attendance has steadily increased.

“As with everything else coming out of lockdown, the return to show house viewing was slow as everyone was cautious and did not want to unnecessarily expose themselves to potentially contracting Covid-19.

“However, as people got used to living more normally again, so more and more began to attend show houses again.”

Although the arranging, managing and hosting of showhouses is the agent’s responsibility, McKirby and Maritz say that sellers also play an important role in ensuring the show day’s success:

- **Prep the house:** Tidy thoroughly and declutter countertops and other surface areas and a vase of fresh flowers in the entrance way is always a welcoming touch.
- **De-personalise your home:** This is very important because the more personal items in your house, the less potential buyers can imagine themselves living there. Pack away photographs and personal clutter, keep the fridge clear of kid’s drawings.
- **Half-empty closets:** Storage space is a priority for most buyers and over-stuffed cupboards will give the impression that there is insufficient storage in your home. If possible, remove half the stuff in your closets then neatly organise what’s left. Buyers will inevitably check things like cupboard door hinges and will want to ascertain how much storage space there is, so make sure all your wardrobes and cabinets are clean and tidy.
- **Clear the garage:** It may be the perfect place to hide the clutter from the house but buyers will want to view this space so rather take the opportunity to clear it now to make a better impression and save yourself the hassle when you move.
- **Vacate the premises on the day:** It may be true that no one knows your house better than you, but viewing properties when the owner is around can make buyers feel very uncomfortable. They are also less likely to ask questions or voice opinions for fear of offending.
- **Conceal the pets:** Not everyone is a dog- or cat-lover and being welcomed by wet licks or stumbling over a smelly litter box could put off a keen buyer. If possible, take the mutts with you when people are viewing – or spoil them and take them for a walk.

“The same reasons that used to drive good attendance to show houses prior to the pandemic still apply - great presentation, realistic pricing and good position,” concludes Odendaal.