

Executive training, professionalisation, tech to boost property management industry

 By [Pearl Scheltema](#)

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Trends that are coming to the forefront in the property management industry this year include a firm focus on training and education, the professionalisation of management agents, as well as the adoption of meeting-friendly tech.



Pearl Scheltema, CEO of Fitzanne Estates

Training and education

One of the most important decisions a body corporate makes annually is the election of its trustees. However, in many cases, the chosen individuals are not fully aware of the extent and implications of their roles and responsibilities in this regard. As such, there has been a drive to encourage sectional title schemes to budget for the education and training of their trustees.

This is the simplest way to ensure that every person who stands in this role can adhere to the Sectional Titles Schemes Management Act (STSMA), the scheme's management and conduct rules, as well as the Community Schemes Ombud Services Act (CSOS Act).

Many sectional title scheme members assume that trustees will learn as they go, but this approach is seldom in the interest of the scheme. Furthermore, trustees also need to understand that they can be held personally and legally responsible for their acts if the scheme or its members suffer losses due to decisions they make.

To this end, Fitzanne Estates has developed a modular, online training programme consisting of short videos that trustees can watch in their own time. This includes 22 videos of 8-10 minutes each. Once a trustee has worked their way through the material, they answer a multiple choice questionnaire and are awarded a certificate that marks them as a trained scheme executive if they get a passing grade of 75% or more.

Professionalisation

Being a managing agent is not the same as being a real estate agent. Property management is a profession on its own with its own identity. At the moment, there is a lot of movement in the industry to lay a solid foundation for this singular profession.

Going this route will benefit the industry by ensuring that managing agents will have a certain level of knowledge specific to their role, as well as enhancing service levels, thereby ensuring consumer and industry protection. Additionally, professionalisation will also create a career path for those individuals in the industry or those wanting to enter the industry.

As such, there is growing consensus that managing agents in general should be fully compliant and belong to the correct regulatory bodies. This includes registration with the EAAB (Estate Agency Affairs Board), as well as a certification by the Council of Debt Collectors.

However, most importantly, they need to be certified by the National Association of Managing Agents (NAMA). The role of NAMA is to promote and advance the interests of managing agents in South Africa.

In fact, the association recently partnered with the University of Pretoria to develop a short online training course aimed at owners, trustees, and occupiers of sectional title schemes.

The content covers the meaning of sectional title ownership, how a sectional title scheme is created, the management thereof, the rights and obligations of owners, as well as the operation of the community scheme's ombud service, as well as many other topics.

After completion of the course, owners, trustees, and occupiers have a clear understanding of what it implies to live in a sectional title scheme and why management of the scheme is so important. Learn more by [listening to this podcast](#).



Trustees can disconnect power to sectional title units where levies are in arrears

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Meeting-friendly tech

A very important part of a managing agent's job is to sit in on meetings with a variety of different roleplayers, and to guide them in reaching agreement about very important issues. In certain cases, a managing agent could attend up to three extensive meetings per week, and are expected to provide a full, yet concise, set of minutes for each thereof within seven days.

Additionally, the STSMA mentioned before obligates bodies corporate to calculate votes in both number and value, which used to mean that all of a scheme's members had to be gathered under one roof to reach quorum.

Fortunately, technological developments are counting in our favour. Meeting-friendly tech platforms like MeetingPal are making things a little easier. This app allows scheme members to vote securely and transparently on a resolution from anywhere in the world by turning their mobiles into secure voting devices. [Listen to this podcast](#) to learn more.

ABOUT PEARL SCHELTEMA

Pearl Scheltema is the CEO of Fitzanne Estates, as well as a sectional title expert, specialist property manager, property administration professional and trustee management trainer. With more than 30 years' experience in the industry, she believes in building her business on loyalty and trust.

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