

# What is Your Best Feature?

What will life be like after 1 June 2007? The really switched-on agents have long recognised that the advent of HIPs presents a golden opportunity to re-examine all the key areas of their business, and sharpen up their act right across the board.

So, ask yourself this simple question. What will customers find most attractive about your business in the brave new post-HIPs world? Will it be your:

- Smiling, confident, competent staff?
- Great marketing?
- Good HIPs service?
- Sold boards?
- Or your cheap fees?

Obviously, I'm sure no-one would want to attract custom on cheap fees alone (Heaven forbid!). So, where do you reckon you stand on the other key attractions?

As far as your staff are concerned, your business should project an image of comfortable competence. As well as being confident and knowledgeable, your customer-facing staff need to be friendly and easy to talk to – particularly when dealing with all the queries about the new legislation that are going to come their way. Thorough training in all aspects of customer service is essential

for everyone in order to create the right impression.

When it comes to marketing their actual business – as opposed to their stock of properties – many agents hardly bother to go through the motions. Creative marketing, on the other hand, will help your business stand out from the mediocre crowd and will draw customers to you – people seeking re-assurance not only about HIPs but about all property matters.

Amongst the myriad questions which your customers are going to ask you about HIPs, many will want to know how the packs are actually compiled. Explaining the process could be complex, so you need a straightforward, stream-lined system for doing so – perhaps using simple diagrams - which can be easily mastered by your staff.

Above all, your biggest magnet is going to be your success in actually selling property. In the post-HIPs world, customers may well be asked to sign up for longer sole agency agreements, and pay withdrawal charges too (which, when you think about it from their point of view, is a bit of a nerve). If such measures are to become the norm, then the public are really going to focus on your actual selling ability.

So, for instance, they're going to be a lot more impressed by "Sold" boards than "For Sale" ones.

Some agents routinely over-value in order to gain instructions. This usually means that a property is on the market for longer. With the public focusing far more on actual sales performance, agents won't be able to get away with this tactic. After 1st June, your valuers will therefore need to look very closely indeed at the quality, quantity and asking price of all your new instructions.

Remember, failure to sell existing property could mean the failure to secure future business!

**Clare Fletcher Training Ltd** offers a range of bespoke training and development programmes for property professionals, specialising in core agency skills.

Tel: 01133 933291  
Mob: 07793 317467

