

# Semigration, smart technologies and other property trends set to dominate

 By [Linda Erasmus](#)

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*Linda Erasmus, director and shareholder of Fine & Country South Africa, looks at the trends set to dominate this year, including online shopping in the real estate sector, emigration abroad but also semigration to South Africa's coastal areas, a growing focus on communal needs of families, and proptech. Ultimately, however, smart buyers will be the winners in 2022.*

## Online shopping in the real estate sector to continue in 2022

The total lockdown experienced in 2020, followed by less-stringent restrictions in 2021, certainly impacted the economy in many ways, including the real estate market. One of the major shifts in consumer behaviour was the move to online purchasing during the long lockdown periods. The age-old tradition of Sunday-show houses was halted owing to the fear of spreading the virus, and many homebuyers were forced to spend more time online, watching videos rather than walking in person through a possible new home.

Providing information for these online shoppers for homes set out new rules and requirements for estate agents and home sellers alike.

The trend of shopping for property online will continue in 2022, and the traditional method of show-houses (residential sector) will ultimately disappear over years to come. Real estate agencies will continue to develop better and more sophisticated websites, collecting information that will make matching the consumer with the product easier.

Estate agents should take note that information about the product (homes for sale) should be accurate, informative and not misleading. Providing different sets of information on one specific home will result in potential buyers losing trust in the provided information. An example of misleading information is where one agent advertises a property, giving information in the description of the property as five bedrooms, where another agent may advertise the property as having four bedrooms and a study. Sellers should take note that they are, in many ways, the culprits who allow this type of confusion.

The real estate sector and the landscape within which it operates have already been changed through the use of technology over the last two decades. However, the use of tech-tools for shopping is now widely accepted, and the demand for trusted and accurate information will once again set the scene for success. The forward trend is online trust, online information and online speed and accuracy.

## South African buyers lucrative for overseas as well as coastal markets

Consumer spending will still be influenced by the pandemic in 2022, same as political activities and decisions surrounding the 2020/2021 lockdown. Prior to lockdown, many South Africans bought properties abroad in countries such as Portugal and Mauritius, and recently many with roots in the UK applied to return to the country of their family origin. These moves were mainly influenced by a loss of confidence in the current leadership and government in South Africa.

But for those who could not find their way across the South African borders, another strong trend developed as people from



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the north started finding greener pastures in the Western Cape, the Eastern Cape and the Garden Route. This semigration mania was spurred on by the fact that companies, because of the lockdown, allowed employees to work from home. It seems that working from home when your home is near the coast seemed to be a much better idea, hence the attraction to the beautiful places situated on the coastline of South Africa.

The movement of property buyers either overseas, or within the country to coastal areas will continue in 2022, resulting in a possible shortage of stock in the Western Cape and other coastal areas and a possible drop in the value of luxury properties in Gauteng.

On the other hand, the rest of the world will continue to benefit from the ongoing arrival of homebuyers from South Africa arriving on their shores. Johannesburg will remain the New York of Africa and will continue to attract buyers from within Africa.



#BehindtheMask: Linda Erasmus, international brand ambassador, Fine & Country

Sindy Peters 23 Apr 2021



## The all-in-one lifestyle - matched to my property needs

In recent years, a lot of emphasis has been put on the word “lifestyle”. In 2022, a good lifestyle will mean to live, work and play at home. People will re-think their living spaces, especially when no-one leaves the home during the day. There may also be a shift of focus from the individual to communal needs; families will become entities to consider as a whole rather than as individuals.

## Repetitive cycles influence property sales

Trends in the movement of people around the globe and within the country have always benefited homebuyers and sellers in South Africa. During 1994, when Mandela’s newly appointed government was elected, people moved in their hordes across the globe out of fear. Lots of sellers and fewer buyer activities resulted in a boom for buyers. But that was short-lived as within five years, everyone was confident and many of those moving away returned to their land of milk and honey.

Just over ten years later, the biggest property boom in history allowed for record sales prices just before the market crashed in 2009. It is therefore nothing new for the markets to respond to the current pandemic in similar ways. People move out of fear and in the hope of a better life somewhere else. In 2022, people will continue to plan their lives in the hope of escaping the Covid virus and of continuing their business from a home-based office and/or trek along the route to greener pastures for their young siblings to have a better life.



## **Smart technology will increase consumer interaction**

Smart real estate companies will collect buyer/seller information to study not only trends, but also to respond quicker when movements of customers change. Various software programs offer exceptional assistance in this matter, however the industry, which seemed to be slow in capturing data, seemed to catch on to the opportunities that these kinds of software programs provide in elevating one estate agency above the other. As consumers became more tech-savvy, the industry was also forced to offer better systems to accommodate the online consumer in the real estate sector. Increased interaction and better systems will provide for better communication with the customer in 2022 and success to those who will focus here.

## **Human behaviour does not change – smart buyers will be the winners**

I also must warn that man's memory is short, and when the pandemic is over, there will be a return to the office. There may be return to the norm within the next ten years when the virus finally dies down. My prediction is that those who buy commercial property in 2022 will follow the 'right move' chain – buy when the property prices are down and sell when property prices are up. Having said that, only a few will have the vision to act on this opportunity; others will once again wait until it is too late.

There are many opportunities available for those who believe in South Africa and the new opportunities available in a post-pandemic era.

## **ABOUT LINDA ERASMUS**

Linda Erasmus is a director and shareholder of Fine & Country South Africa (Pty) Ltd. She holds an LLB degree and entered the real estate sector in 1986, from where she moved through the different stages of salesperson, manager, franchise owner and ultimately becoming the first South African woman to launch an international brand successfully in South Africa.

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