

Land & New Homes Agents | Feature

BPC PROUD

Success breeds success

The best land & new homes agents don't rest on their laurels, but continually seek new ways to work with their customers to deliver next-level products and services. **BRIDGET CORDY** reports

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BRIDGET CORDY

BRIDGET CORDY is a Senior Sales Director at BPC Property, a leading land and new homes agent. She has over 15 years of experience in the industry and has successfully sold a wide range of properties, including residential, commercial, and industrial. She is a member of the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) and the National Land and New Homes Association (NLNHA). She is also a frequent speaker at industry events and has been featured in several industry publications. She is passionate about helping clients achieve their property goals and is known for her exceptional customer service and attention to detail.

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return to the human, to taking your time with people and just taking as long as it takes."

Recognising that this human element works best in tandem with tech, the agency has also updated its app/portal, My Foxtons, where people can sign legal documents or submit an offer online whenever suits them best.

Increased demand for personalisation and self-serving tech is one of the most notable trends according to Zoe Leahy, director, land & new homes at Clothier Lacey, which provides marketing and PR services for professional services firms involved in land and new homes, from land agents and affordable housing consultants to developers and estate agents.

"The most effective marketing technique is always giving the customer what they want!" says Leahy. "People buy in different ways. Some people want all the information in an email, some want to download a brochure to peruse and some want a follow-up call by an agent while others might want to visit a marketing office."

As a result, Clothier Lacey looks at new digital trends and how best to apply marketing techniques from other industries that might set their clients apart and capture the attention of a particular audience.

"We also like to introduce new formats such as beautifully illustrated maps and really useful content rather than lots of sales superlatives," says Leahy. "Video is still really effective but more and more we understand that people want to see personalised content. The most important part is still the relationship with the customer so the marketing and sales process should be seamlessly integrated."

Simon Wilkins, who set up Face Fit 19 years ago, also believes people skills are going to be the most fundamental part of the service to customers. Wilkins, who provides executive search services to

developers, started out as an estate agent before becoming a sales & marketing director in housebuilding.

"Expectations are rising and the bar is pushed another few inches higher every year," says Wilkins. "So the type of person that's going to be the best in sales, in either new homes agency or housebuilding, is going to have a rounded perspective of the world, not just one area."

"Many sales managers who have managed to climb their way through the ranks within housebuilding and who've never worked in estate agency, don't realise how difficult estate agency is and what's required. I think the perfect sales manager in housebuilding would be one who starts in estate agency, and learns to become very tenacious and very detailed at sales progression and people skills."

"Often you have to be a great sales person to become a great land person. It's all about relationships and landowners doing deals with people they want to work with, sell to and trust. There's a massive difference between land and sales agents because a typical estate agent selling second hand homes is not going to be the same as someone who can go and meet a landowner and parcel up 40 acres and decide how best to go about disposing of it on their behalf."

Having already transacted in excess of 25,000 plots with a combined GDV of over £1bn since founding land agency Walter Cooper last summer, Simon Cox also has ambitions to change the landscape of how the land sector operates.

"From day one, we've always said we are a business who cares, not just about our clients, but about our local environment and community," he says. "You've got to give back, you've got to make a difference. I'm very passionate about what I do but I also love that it enables me to help others."



Cox is keen to help clients by lobbying for planning policy reform. He encourages everyone involved with the process to engage and have their say in how it could be improved.

"As land agents, we are neither aligned to housebuilders or to planning officers. We're not anti-planners by any means. We think they are not given the tools or resources to do their job effectively. More communication is needed between these two parties to avoid lengthy planning delays and build the houses we need faster."

"It's critical we all work together," says Cox. "It's not as simple as relying on developers to build houses, it requires land agents, planning departments, government, architects, planners, everyone needs to come together and understand that it's not a fight to the death of who can earn more than anyone else. We've got an actual job to do here that's important to the welfare of societal issues in this country. It requires all of us to come together and to work together."



A recent deal facilitated by Walter Cooper in Hertfordshire, currently at consented status with a land value of £5.15m



Walter Cooper's chief operating officer Ollie Byson, office manager Gemma Leary, managing director Simon Cox, operations manager Alice Cox, land director Nigel Palmer, and land manager Harry Swanson