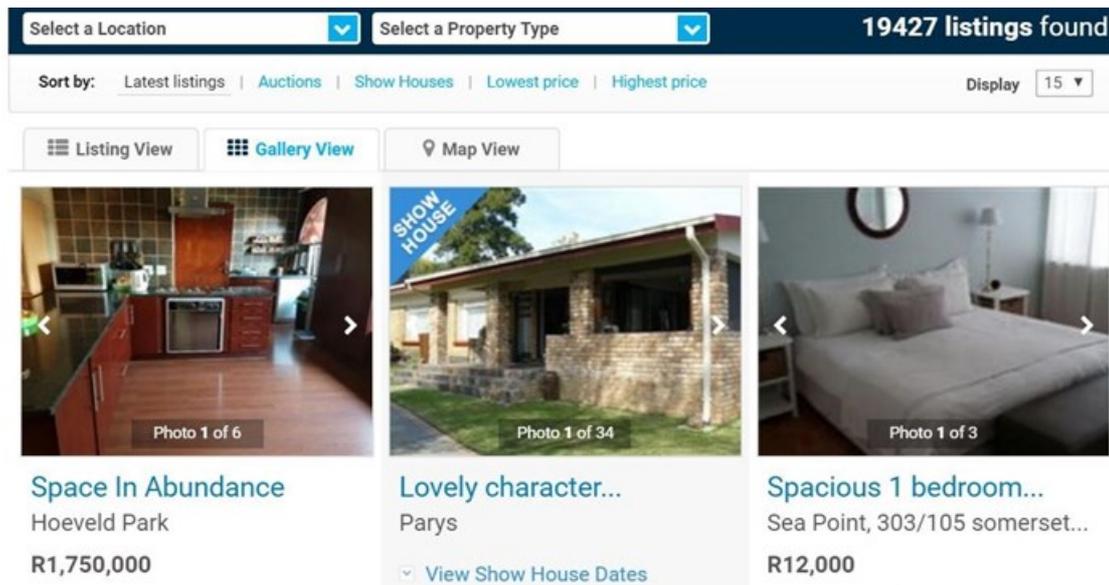


# What's in a property advert?

By  Richard Gray

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Open any daily newspaper, weekend spread or browse media online and you'll more often than not notice the property classifieds or a property related advert. The real estate market remains to be a large advertising contributor to media groups, and rightly so. We estate agents many times have to compete selling the same property, and in the modern age where multiple available platforms undoubtedly influence your reach, structuring your advert is of utmost performance.



The screenshot shows a property listing website interface. At the top, there are two dropdown menus: 'Select a Location' and 'Select a Property Type'. To the right of these is a dark blue bar with the text '19427 listings found'. Below the dropdowns, there is a 'Sort by:' section with options: 'Latest listings', 'Auctions', 'Show Houses', 'Lowest price', and 'Highest price'. To the right of the sort options is a 'Display' section with a dropdown menu set to '15'. Below the sort and display options are three view options: 'Listing View', 'Gallery View' (which is selected), and 'Map View'. The main content area displays three property listings. The first listing is titled 'Space In Abundance' in Hoeveld Park, priced at R1,750,000, and features a kitchen photo labeled 'Photo 1 of 6'. The second listing is titled 'Lovely character...' in Parys, priced at R12,000, and features a house exterior photo labeled 'Photo 1 of 34' with a 'SHOW HOUSE' banner. The third listing is titled 'Spacious 1 bedroom...' in Sea Point, 303/105 somerset..., priced at R12,000, and features a bedroom photo labeled 'Photo 1 of 3'.

We still see many estate agents follow the traditional template of trying to sell the home with elaborate adjectives and hard sell headings. But do buyers and your clients selling their homes respond to those ads, and are you providing your client the service they deserve and more importantly are you making it easy for the buyer to find their desired listing?

The dawn of modern technology and digital marketing has made the inclusion of keywords in your advert an essential component. Your listings need to be worded in such a way that someone searching online is able to find the property relatively easy and then you need to consider that these keywords add weight of your website's Google ranking as well.

Thankfully most property portals have a structure in place that assist agents in creating their adverts. However, the descriptions and photographs paired with the advert still lacks a strategic approach.

## Who is your target market?

The first thing to take note of is, who your target market is. This will determine your language as well as what keywords to identify. For example, if you're selling a home in an area with a large amount of millennial demand, it would counterproductive to use forceful, traditional jargon. Studies show that millennials are more informed and often know quite a bit about the property market. Instead of strictly describing the home, add insights that are of value - like the potential investment return.

Once you've established who you are speaking to, identify the three most attractive features of the home. Write them in plain simple language. People browsing for homes want to be informed on the property, not sold on it. Let the listing speak for itself. In this light photographs can be a great addition. Don't just snap away, often estate agents lack the photographic skill to present the home in its desired manner and do more harm with their photos. Try and do the property justice. Don't just showcase the bedroom, try and capture its feel.

Keywords and SEO for some sound like swear words. But they are essential tools for your business and do a great service for your client and the potential buyer. Choose phrases that the buyer would need to type into a search engine to locate the property. Then, don't just paste it into the body, blend the keywords and phrases with the rest of the description.

These techniques are basic and research into these themes will arm you with fantastic knowledge. Wording your advert is how you present your business, your position in the market and customer service to the world. Make it count.

## ABOUT RICHARD GRAY

Richard Gray is CEO of Harcourts Real Estate South Africa. He joined the group in September 2010. Gray brings extensive experience in IT, project management, corporate operations and financial services provision, having been CEO of mortgage originator Bond Choice, to the table. He believes that the key to the group's prospects are the strong brand, industry-leading value proposition, talented people, and the benefits of being part of a powerful international real estate group.

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