

# No major alarm bells in the property market yet

 By [Sindy Peters](#)

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We interviewed Simon Bray, CEO of Private Property, to find out how the property sector is evolving, what some of the challenges are, and how the company is staying on top of trends.

## ■ *How does Private Property stay on top of trends in the property sector?*

We have an immense amount of data generated from the traffic on our website which we analyse to identify trends in the property market. In terms of best practice in the industry, we attend international conferences every year where we engage with other major property portals to exchange ideas and knowledge. We also stay up to date with any new technology and if there is anything that we feel could enhance the experience of our site's browsers, we implement them on our website.

## ■ *Are there any plans to expand on the online experience for clients?*

The nature of technology business is innovation and continuous development. We are listening to user feedback on a daily basis and always looking for ways to improve the platform and their home search experience.



## *How important is content marketing in Private Property's communications strategy?*

Content marketing has become a vital part of our communications strategy. We've been evolving from just being a property listing website to providing our browsers with more information around property. Last year we completely redesigned our Advice Centre to make it easier for browsers to find property-related news and advice. We also launched our Neighbourhoods section which is a first for the South African property market. The Neighbourhoods section of the website has great local content about the best features in the area, and has video and a full gallery that showcases the highlights of living in that particular neighbourhood.

## *Describe a typical Private Property client?*

There isn't a typical Private Property client. We have well over a million users visiting our website every month and they have different reasons for visiting the website. They could be people looking to buy, rent or sell property, people looking for property advice or just property enthusiasts who like looking at property.

## ■ *What are some of the challenges in the South African property market?*

The current economic climate does present a challenge since it has an impact on the affordability of buyers in the market. Affordability affects first time buyers the most and since this sector makes up around half of all mortgage applications, there might be a knock-on effect on the rest of the market. At the moment, we're seeing a slowdown in the market but there are no major alarm bells going off.

The other challenge is uncertainty created by government legislation. There was the ban on foreign land ownership and the visa requirements for visitors entering the country which would have affected foreign direct investment in the property market. More recently, the Expropriation Bill, which scraps the "willing buyer, willing seller" principle, is causing some

concern.

■ ***How does Private Property differentiate itself in terms of client service?***

We have a dedicated customer service team at our head office in Umhlanga that are available every day of the week on telephone, email or live chat. Our social media team is also available to help with queries on Facebook and Twitter.

■ ***Are there any expansion plans on the cards for Private Property that you can share?***

We do have a few exciting projects in the pipeline for 2016 but I can't talk about them just yet.

*Software designer, online marketer, and avid surfer Simon Bray is the CEO of Private Property. Having previously lead the product and technology department and served as the COO, he brings a passion for technology and a deep understanding of the property industry to the business.*

## ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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