

South Africans embrace smart home investments

Data from leading South African online home services marketplace, Kandua.com, shows that South Africans are staying put in their homes and making smart investments with the help of experts.



Source: Jeanne du Plessis, Kandua's head of communications.

“We compared our 2023 data with last year’s and there are a few insights that emerge. First, it looks like people are making smaller, savvier investments in their homes, like foregoing a full-scale renovation for a kitchen or bathroom upgrade,” says Jeanne du Plessis, head of communications for Kandua.

“There also seems to be an increase in demand for expert services – the types of services that would not result in a successful DIY project for the average homeowner. Then, we have some lingering aftereffects and normalisation post-pandemic. Lastly, there are continued investments in utility backup solutions, though the demand for solar systems specifically has plateaued,” she adds.

Small, smart renovations

“Demand for renovators is down, but requests for kitchen specialists have more than doubled, and for bathroom specialists it is up by 17%,” says Du Plessis. “Bathroom and kitchen renovations are some of the most popular, and for good reason: these are most likely to increase the value of your home. Perhaps we will see the larger projects come through next year, as we have seen an increase in demand for quantity surveyors and architects.

“Other small ways to breathe new life into a space are showing an uptick: requests for blind installers are up slightly, and for carpet cleaners there is a 23% increase. However, wallpaper seems to have fallen out of favour this year, with demand down by about 8%,” she says.

“In the garden, it looks like people are working with what they have rather than making big changes: irrigation projects are up by 57%, and there is a 23% increase in demand for garden services, while landscaper requests have declined by 17%,” she adds.

Do it yourself, but only if you can

“The shift towards specialist services has been really interesting,” says Du Plessis. “For example, more people are looking for IT support, appliance-, fridge-, TV- and aircon repairs. But, handyman requests are down by 19%. The increase in demand for repairs – rather than replacements – fits with the previous point made about a more frugal, sawyer approach to home improvement.

“Of course, we always advise getting an expert to help with your home project – in the long run that will definitely save you frustration and will probably also save you money. The professionals on Kandua.com are all small businesses or independent professionals, so they tend to be more affordable, while knowing their trade well,” Du Plessis explains.

Post-Covid normalisation

More people are required back in the office, and travel and entertainment habits have stabilised. This has a few implications:

- All the pets that were adopted during the pandemic need to be taken care of when their owners are away. “The demand for pet sitters has almost tripled in the last year,” says Du Plessis.
- People are staying put in their homes. “It seems like the ‘semigration’ trend has slowed, and coupled with a stagnant property market and rising interest rates, it’s no surprise that moving services have seen the biggest decline, with demand dropping by around 60%,” she adds.
- Events are back in full swing. “We’ve seen big movements in demand for event décor and caterers. However, requests for event planners are down, echoing what we are seeing for other services, where people want the help of experts where they don’t have the skills, but are less likely to outsource the full project,” explains Du Plessis.
- Being on the road is as perilous as ever, she says: “We’ve seen a 5% increase in panel beater requests, and triple the amount of tow trucks have been called out. The demand for driving instructors is flat though!”

Be prepared

As issues with water and electricity supply continue, the demand for borehole specialists has doubled. Gas installations are also more popular, with requests up by 11% year on year. As the solar market becomes more saturated, demand here has levelled out.

Du Plessis qualifies that by adding that, “Requests for electricians are up by 18%, however, and we would not be surprised if many of these are for the installation of more affordable backup solutions such as inverters, rather than full solar systems which require a bigger capital outlay.”