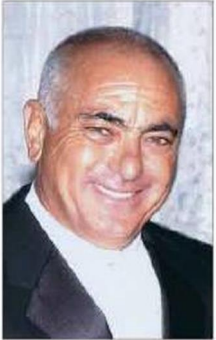




AVE: 25223,19 (ZAR)

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Technology Rules the Waves

Smart solutions transform the navigation of online real estate.

TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING every aspect of our lives today, from how we work with money to how we buy and live in our houses. These days it's as rare to see a chequebook as it is to find a company without a website. But even websites are being changed by new technology since the advent of smartphones, tablets and phablets.

Technology is changing at a pace that most people battle to get their heads around, but what they do know is that having a mobile smart device gives them an instant portal to the world, no matter where they are. They're used to receiving information instantaneously, and in a format that is quick and user-friendly. If most travellers around the world research their holidays that way, why should their expectation of researching real estate be any different?

It is this knowledge that has prompted our company to undergo a top-to-bottom audit of its own online real estate and do a complete renovation. Lew Geffen Sotheby's International Realty South Africa is the largest Sotheby's Realty licensee outside of the US, and our online space has to reflect this. We have incorporated the latest home-finding technology, including geo-tagging and one-touch navigation, to make the end-user experience simple and smart.

If, for instance, you're driving on a Sunday and you visit our site, there's a one-touch button that'll show you all of the houses for sale and on show in your immediate vicinity. When you see something you like, just touching another button will instantly open the GPS software on your phone and give you directions from your current location to that specific property.

There's another button that will dial the property agent's number without you having to exit the website, and yet another that will automatically save that agent's details into your contacts. It's all one-touch technology and it turns our site into a smart tool for house-hunting on your smart device.

The way we find our dream homes is changing with things like smart devices, but technology is also changing the concept

of what our dream homes could be. While we're not yet docking our flying cars in the garage and being welcomed home by robot butlers, smart technology is starting to make home management a lot more affordable, environmentally friendly and safer.

We are already seeing homes in South Africa that have climate control, lighting, sound systems, irrigation and even window coverings centrally managed through a single computer system. And because security is so important to us, we're even seeing the first generation of biometric security systems being installed into homes.

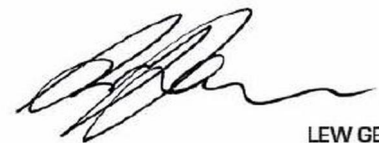
A lot of the future smart technology in residential property is going to come in the resources conservation area, though. If you think solar panels are clever, scientists are already working with thin-film solar technology that can be applied to make every window in your house a power generator, and the next step after that will be total house coverings that could even feed back into the electricity grid. That's aside from affordable geothermal units and inexpensive, residential-sized water reticulation systems that will allow households to recycle every drop they use.

But what about health care? Scientists in Japan have already designed loos that can detect diabetes, and they're working on even smarter ones that can detect things like pregnancy, drug use and colon cancer, so in the next 15 years your first stop before even thinking about going to the doctor is most likely going to be the bathroom!

The number of new, technologically state-of-the-art homes is steadily increasing at the top end of the South African market, but will eventually start to cross price bands as technology becomes standardised.

What will remain constant, though, is that Lew Geffen Sotheby's International Realty will be using cutting-edge technology to back up the most professional real estate service in the country to ensure that people find their dream homes – even if they don't yet come with their own robot butlers.

Happy house hunting! □



LEW GEFFEN