

# **Module 5 : A Day in the Life of an Estate Agent**

- Routine and self-discipline
- Time management
- Self-starter attitude
- Priorities and last-minute interruptions

## **Topics covered in this module:**

- Routine and self-discipline
- Time management
- Self-starter attitude
- Priorities and last-minute interruptions
- How to use every minute of your day

**A Day in the Life of an Estate Agent – 5m 04s**

## 5.1 Introduction

**There probably isn't a typical day in the life of an estate agent; every day will bring fresh challenges.**

There will be routine, brought on by the need for admin to be constantly updated, but for the most part, you will be in charge of what happens during your day. You will also be solely responsible for how successful your day is.

Most jobs have set times for when they start and stop which is why people talk about working 9 to 5. Being an estate agent does not fall into this bracket, so, if you find that you are thinking about your job as an estate agent as conforming to the 9 to 5 mould, it's time for you to take a close look at what you can do to break out of this.

The danger is this: If you are seeing your career as an estate agent as humdrum, then you are missing out on everything that makes a career in property so stimulating and rewarding. In other words, if you are not getting excited about the start of each day, then it's time for a change of attitude or routine or both.

## 5.2 A Double Day in the Life of an Estate Agent

**Estate agents have two distinct parts to their days.**

The first part is the admin and office part, the second is the marketing and client network building part. While the admin part is important, one should never lose sight of the marketing and networking part. That must always be going on alongside the admin.

Let's start with the admin element of the day, because that has times allocated to it.

Somewhere between 08:00 and 09:00; let's say 08:15.

The daily meeting is for people from the different departments in the company to catch up with what happened the day before. This is essential because the agents are usually out of the office for most of the day and although they are constantly in contact with the office, there are always developments that need to be brought to their attention.

Usually, the sales manager or the owner of the company will present the latest sales figures or give an update on the movement of company stock from the day before, if there was any. There will also be an update on any new clients who might have walked into the office. Their details will be handed to the agents and the agent most likely to have a property that might suit their needs will take the client on.

There will also be a briefing on new properties that have been taken onto the company's books.

With both the new clients and the new properties, if the agents work in defined areas of the town, then the new listing or new client will be assigned to the relevant agent.

## 5.3 After the Meeting

**Once the meeting, which will usually last about forty five minutes, is done, the people return to their work stations and get their days going.**

The agents will be straight into communications.

The morning is the best time for making phone calls and organising appointments. People are less likely to have left the office and will still be fresh and less likely to be in the flow of their work day. They will be more amenable to making appointments.

It is also a good time of day to make enquiries of people that estate agents work with such as solicitors and surveyors. When you have sold a property you will need to keep track of progress of the transfer and registration so that you can update your sellers and buyers. It may be that the people in the surveyor's or solicitor's office will have to get back to you with information. It is tactically better to call in the morning so that they can come back to you before the end of the day, rather than drag the matter over to the following day.

Keeping up to date with emails is another essential function. Answering them within twenty four hours is a good habit to get into. Again, attending to this straight after the daily meeting is preferable. You might need to ask a colleague or manager for input and you are more likely to find them in the office and willing to help before their day gets underway. You are also not likely to think that you can respond to them when you get back to the office in the afternoon; this might not happen because of delayed appointments or new business that you have to attend to.

Not making a habit of returning phone calls and responding to emails directly after the morning meeting will soon see you developing bad habits and a blossoming backlog of communication. You will also have a rapidly developing reputation for being unreliable, which will be very hard to reverse.

## 5.4 Administrative Duties

**Although many estate agents regard administrative duties as being non-income producing, they are a vital part of the estate agent's function and are indeed income producing.**

You are being paid to put the whole deal together and see it through to the end. You are the shepherd in the mix and it is very much in your interests to be hands-on with as much of the process as possible. As the front person, or "client facing" element in the agency, you carry the agency's reputation and your reputation with you in everything you do.

If you don't do as much as possible for the client and stay as engaged as you can for the duration of the process, you will not be able to answer questions that your client might ask you about the progress of their sale. Saying that you don't know, but it's somewhere in the solicitor's office is not going to impress your client. An attitude like that might not affect the current sale, but could you really expect your client to refer you to any of their friends or associates?

**Functions that are considered wholly administrative are things like:**

- Entering data on new listings that you have signed up
- Updating your client database as and when it is necessary
- Creating marketing material for new listings and making sure that the property is correctly entered on the company records
- Booking and inserting ads in local newspapers for your listed properties
- Researching the market in your area and making sure that your properties are competitively positioned
- Updating your section of the company website and taking care of any social media traffic that is your responsibility.

While being involved in these functions may be a little time consuming, it serves to keep you in touch with the market and in control of your listings. You will never be in the position where a client might ask you why you described their property in a certain way and you have to say that it wasn't you, but the office assistant.

## 5.5 Heading out

**By about 11:30, you should be ready to leave the office and start your appointments to present properties to buyers and to visit properties that you will be assessing and valuing.**

You will often see ads for estate agent vacancies where the employers are calling for "self-starters". What they are looking for are people who will take responsibility for their own schedules and not waste a minute; people who have back-up plans for when appointments fall through. They also want people who focus on self-improvement and achieving the best results they can.

In the property marketing business, you cannot afford to waste time and take the afternoon off because an appointment stood you up. If you don't have back-up plans and make sure that you achieve as much as you can in a day, you will soon find yourself lagging in earnings and failing to progress.

With that in mind, let's get the business end of the day going.

If you are employed by one of the larger agencies, you will probably have a company car and a mobile phone. Although you may not have paid for these facilities, remember that they are by no means free. You have a duty to care for them and the company has given you use of them so that you can make money for yourself and the company.

Part of your daily routine must be to ensure that your car is always spotlessly clean. It is a preferred practice for estate agents to take buyers to see houses in the agent's car. This allows you conversation time with the clients and allows you to give the clients a bit of a tour of the area that the property is located in. Your personal and professional pride must never allow you to transport clients in anything but a spotlessly clean car.

The mobile phone may be yours or it may be company property. Either way, you have to ensure that it is also in tip top condition. It might not be the latest model, but it must be efficient and in good condition. No cracked screens, badly scratched casing or inappropriate screen savers.

As your office and clients will expect you to be constantly available, the battery must always be

charged and you must have a hands-free kit so that you can take calls on the go. Your laptop or tablet also has to be in the same condition as your phone.

It's a matter of attention to detail. Just as you would not dress poorly for work, your equipment must also be presentable.

First impressions are easy to create and difficult to change.

#### **Take a Quick Recap Test**

[viralQuiz id=204]

## **5.6 Property Checks**

**If you don't have appointments to show properties or have a little down time between appointments, you can take the opportunity to follow up with property checks on properties that are being repaired and spruced up prior to going on the market.**

It is a good idea to be involved in the pre-marketing touch-ups and fixing as far as you can. It will diminish the chance of being caught out during showings.

Being ambushed by a defect that you thought had been repaired before the house went on show can be difficult to recover from. You should always regard people you are showing properties to as long term clients. If you are newly acquainted with them and you have made a statement about the condition of the house, any deviation from what you said will set you up in their minds as an unreliable estate agent. Along with that assumption comes the baggage of all the devious estate agents that have gone before you.

Your reputation is something you should work very hard to develop and protect. You cannot allow or tolerate any detraction from that.

## **5.7 Time Management**

**This can become a problem for estate agents from time to time. If you are in the residential property market as opposed to the commercial or rural property market, you will find that your clients will often only be available after hours.**

They will be employed in jobs that require regular hours and they will not be able to constantly take time out of their day to view property.

This means that you might find yourself at a loose end when it comes to actively marketing properties in your portfolio.  
Being organised and prepared is essential.

If the area you are working in is too far from the office or the time that you have is too short to return to the office, you should be prepared with details of follow-up calls that you need to make. These can be to clients or to professionals like surveyors and solicitors - follow up on your morning calls.

If you are up to date on that side of things, there are other calls you can make. Networking and staying in touch with your client and contact network is never a waste of time. Call someone whom you haven't seen in a while and arrange to meet for a drink after work one evening. Another valuable time usage is studying. You will never know enough about everything. Think of what your most recent contact or client does for a living and do some research into that. You may discover something that will help you expand your knowledge, or you may discover something that the client could help you understand better. Asking them an informed question about their profession will invariably endear you to him or her and help them remember you when a friend of theirs is looking for an estate agent. It all goes into being aware of the world around you and being involved.

## **Managing interruptions**

According to management research, interruptions occur every hour and they can result in loss of work equalling nearly six hours. It's hard to refocus and get back to the work at hand. However, as estate agent, telephonic, email or personal visits from clients are inevitable and communication keeps your business thriving.

In other words, you can't stop interruptions but you can plan them in away that minimises their disruptive impact.

The Eisenhower grid helps you classify tasks as urgent, important, not urgent and so on.

**Urgent and important tasks, for example, may include:**

1. Contract work with deadlines
2. Following up active leads and calling past and prospective clients
3. Return calls

**Important but not urgent tasks:**

(Please note that if not attended to, the following tasks may become urgent)

4. Responding to emails
5. Filling out contracts
6. Setting up property listings
7. Communicating with current clients
8. Scheduling viewings and photography sessions with professionals

**Urgent but not important tasks:**

These may take up your time and waste your energy but at times, you need to just get them over and done with. However, they should come after the first two lists are complete.

9. Returning other estate agents' calls
10. Responding to social media feedback and communication

Anything else may be classified as 'not urgent and not important' and may in fact end up sucking your energy. This includes browsing social media, reading all emails at once, chatting with other agents without an agenda and constantly checking your messages.



## 5.8 Late Showings

**Working when the rest of the world seems to be heading out for dinner or off to a movie is the lot of the residential estate agent.**

Learn to love it. It means that you have more commission earning hours in the day than your colleagues in other areas of real estate.

It often happens that buyers can only view houses after hours. This is one of the reasons that you have to really understand what your client is looking for and what their needs are. You may get away with wasting their precious time once or twice. After that they will suddenly be unavailable.

By not listening and hoping if you show them all sorts of property that something might stick, will only result in lots of free time for you.

Make sure that you use the end of your day wisely and show clients what they are looking for.

### **FACT**

58% of agents said they spent most of their work hours at the office

## 5.9 The End of the Day

**Once you have finished your day, it is time to look to the future. There is no time to stand still if you are a career estate agent.**

Your way home must be a tour of one or two shops and places where people are still at work. Your purpose here is to make contact with people who should be on your database of networking contacts. People who run shops and restaurants are usually gregarious and pick up when people are new to the neighbourhood or when a customer of theirs is thinking of selling and up or down sizing. If you are thinking that there is only one restaurant and one convenience store on your way home, then look for other routes to drive home by and see what places there are to drop in and expand your network.

If you have a parents' meeting at the school, or the historical association in your area is having a meeting or visiting speaker, you can excuse yourself the restaurant tour on the way home, but make sure the journey is put to good use.

Now that you are home, the day is not over. It's time to catch up on the day's news and to put in a bit of serious study time. If you are not heading for a qualification in something to do with marketing or being a better estate agent, then there are bound to be other avenues to pursue. Marketing and negotiation skills? Economics and how to interpret international market movements? There is more than enough to be getting on with.

And of course, you must not forget your family.

## 5.10 Ready for the Next Day

**You may remember, at the start of this section, we said that the estate agent's day starts somewhere shortly after 08:00 with a meeting.**

That wasn't entirely true.

The time before you get to the office is valuable time. Maybe you are up early and studying, maybe you are at the gym.

Either way, it's time that can be put to good use. Sitting in traffic is no one's favourite thing. Leaving home early and getting some exercise with people who are on your networking list, or who could be, will set you up for the day and keep you fit.

Not all of us are fitness enthusiasts, but that won't let you off the hook. Leaving the house early is still a good idea. How about making it a habit to visit a local coffee shop and make contact with the owner and some customers?

## **Summary**

There is a lot of time in a day. While most people accept the agendas handed to them by their employers or the routines that their professions and careers have developed over ages, you are in a position to dominate your day and insist that you receive maximum return from it. Never rest on your laurels or think that you don't have anything to learn. If you look closely enough, you will find a place where your knowledge or expertise need improvement. Little questions like: "When did you last have a detailed conversation with your financial advisor and know exactly what they were talking about?" or "How is the latest financial market news out of China going to impact the local residential or commercial property prices?" can set you on a life changing quest and having a broad knowledge of the world will definitely help you gain the trust of clients. It's all in the name of building your business. If you don't have a well laid plan to fill as much of your day as possible with marketing and business building activity, you may never advance beyond the average. The day set out for you by the office forms the scaffolding for you to construct your future. Don't let it go to waste.

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