

"How to Sell My House Online"

(An Expert Guide For UK Property Owners)

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Introduction To Selling Online

If you are using an [estate agent](#) to [sell property](#) then this guide will show you:

A simple & cheap way to dramatically increase the number of buyers your home is marketed to.

This will help you to achieve the highest sale price possible because when more buyers want the same property you initiate a bidding war that drives prices up.

How to further increase the priority of your house sale with your estate agent by using the Internet alongside. This will get you moving home faster.

How to potentially sell property without having to pay your estate agent's fee, thereby saving you a considerable sum of money.

Important Note:

The information in this guide is going to be a lot easier to follow if you arrange your Home Information Pack through your [conveyancing solicitor](#) or an Independent Pack Provider.

This is because you'll then have complete control over your HIP and be free to market your property in anyway you please.

If your estate agent has arranged (or paid for) your HIP, they could possibly make it difficult for you to meet the obligation you have as a property seller to provide access to your HIP to potential private buyers.

We recommend that you talk through your plans to market your

property on [private sale websites](#) with your estate agent.

The Importance of the Internet

The Internet is now far & away the most effective marketing medium for attracting house buyers. You will not find an estate agent that disagrees with that fact.

A recent survey by "The Negotiator" magazine (The UK's largest circulation magazine for estate agents) found that:

60.5% of estate agents believe that between 61-80% of buyers start their searches of a new property online.

In 5 years time most agent believe that between 81-100% of buyers will start looking for a property online.

The typical estate agent spends 41-80% of their marketing budget on the Internet. In 5 years time that will rise to 71-100%.

In short, the survey highlights the dominance of the Internet as the #1 method for finding buyers and the demise of press advertising.

So, now that you understand how important the Internet is to the success of your sale, here's the real question....

"Where on the Internet will your estate agent be marketing your property"?

The answer is via one or more of the 5 major property portals:

It goes without saying that having your property advertised on one of more of these portals gets you sale off to a good start.

However, there are more places on the Internet where you'll find housebuyers, places your estate agent's marketing efforts will not reach.

There's even a die-hard group of homebuyers out there that are so fed-up with UK estate agents, they refuse to have anything to do with them (they'll only deal direct with vendors or house builders).

Considering it only takes one buyer to make your sale, it makes sense to find all these other house buyers and get your property in front of as many house hunters as possible....

If you know how to privately exploit the Internet you can quickly & cheaply reach an extra 3-4 million home buyers on top of your estate agent's efforts.

How to Privately Exploit the Power of Online House Sale Advertising

"Selling Dual" (as it's called) is not a new idea.

In fact a growing number of proactive sellers have been using this tactic since the late 1990's.

They have found (as you will) that advertising your property privately on the Internet alongside the efforts of your estate agent is a simple and effective way to:

Make your agent work harder so you move home faster.

This works because when you advertise privately alongside an estate agent you introduce an element of competition. The estate agent knows that if he can't find a buyer before you do, he won't earn any commission (no agent wants to be beaten by a "[Private Sale Website](#)")

Attract the maximum number of buyers & therefore sell for the highest price possible.

Cheaply reserve the possibility of saving many £1,000's by finding a homebuyer privately & cutting out the estate agent.

Of course, having found a property buyer you can always let your estate agent progress the sale if you don't wish to do it yourself.

You will have to pay the agent's commission but the important job of selling your property will be done.

Now, before you advertise your house on any "private sale" websites, you need to be aware that not all websites are created equal and some are not safe to use at all!

Beware When Choosing a Private Sale Website

When you instruct an estate agent you should have to sign a contract.

As I've discussed in other guides, the type of contract that's in your best interest is one where your agent is instructed on a "sole agency" basis.

Effectively this means that out of all the estate agents in existence, he's the only one you're letting market your property. The biggest mistake made when using the "selling dual" tactic is choosing to advertise with a "private sale" website that breaches the terms of an agent's "sole agency" agreement.

If you make this mistake you'll have to pay the estate agent's fee even if you find a buyer yourself.

To totally guard yourself against this it's best to understand a little background information....

"Selling Dual", Estate Agents & The Office of Fair Trading

Up until December '05 all "private sale" websites were legally classified as "publishing companies" & many homeowners had started to cotton-on to this idea of "Selling Dual".

The way we see it is this:

The success the public were having in finding buyers themselves worried estate agents. They saw this growing trend of "Selling Dual" as a threat to their stranglehold over the industry.

Estate agents argued that "private sale" sites were misleading the public by calling themselves "publishing companies".

They felt that some "private sale" websites were actually engaged in Estate Agency work (as defined by The Estate Agency Act 1979) & should really be classified as "Estate Agency businesses"....

The Office of Fair Trading was pressurised into investigating the

issue.

Now, why would estate agents be keen to have "private sale" websites classified as "Estate Agency businesses".

Was it out of their heightened sense of civic duty?

Maybe? Then again maybe not!

Perhaps their real motivation lies in the statutory wording of an estate agent's "Sole Agency" agreement.

Statutory Wording - Sole Agency Agreement

"You will be liable to pay remuneration to [Estate Agent's name], in addition to any other costs or charges agreed, if at any time unconditional contracts for the sale of the property are exchanged:

With a purchaser introduced by us during the period of our sole agency, or with whom we had negotiations about the property during that period, or

With a purchaser introduced by another agent during that period."

Now, according to the statutory wording you only have to pay your estate agent's commission if they, or **another agent** finds you a buyer.

"Sole Agency" contracts do not prevent homeowners from finding a buyer themselves, whether that's by advertising in the local press, a supermarket notice board or an online "publishing company".

So I think it's pretty clear....

Having private sale websites classified as "Estate Agency businesses" would clearly be in the interest of estate agents & would put a stop to the growing trend of "Selling Dual".

What You Need to Know About the Situation Today

You may be wondering what came of the Office of Fair Trading

investigation that I mentioned earlier?

Well, in December 2005 the [OFT issued guidance](#) on how to determine whether a private sale website was engaged in estate agency work or just straightforward publishing work.

Unfortunately this guidance muddied the water somewhat and has caused much confusion (a situation not helped by some members of the national press who in my opinion reported on the guidance inaccurately and a little irresponsibly).

The press took the opportunity to create sensational headlines by inferring that the OFT guidance meant homeowners were no longer allowed to use private sale websites alongside a traditional estate agent.

This was plain wrong!

All the OFT guidance really said was that if you use a private sale website that engages in activities considered as "Estate Agency work", then you will still have to pay your estate agent their fee.

So to remain safe, all you need to do is choose a "private sale" website that does not engage in what could be considered "Estate Agency work".

What Could be Considered Estate Agency Work?

Looking at the [OFT guidance](#) I mentioned earlier, it considers that in a court of law the following activities are likely to come under the definition of "Estate Agency Work":

Sending out property particulars and arranging viewings.

Receiving and fielding queries from potential sellers or buyers and passing on details to your clients.

Providing clients with a 'For Sale' board and/or putting it up outside their property where the board contains [The Private Sale Company] contact details.

Many private sale websites are unwittingly engaged in what a court would consider to be estate agency work. Because of this, you need to be very careful which one you choose.

There are a few that have been assessed by "Trading Standards" and confirmed to be providing a service that does not conflict with an estate agent's "Sole Agency" agreement.

By clicking the link below you'll find a regularly updated shortlist of the websites we've dealt with in the past and know to have been cleared by Trading Standards:

[Updated List of websites that are safe to use](#)

Watch Out for This Little Trick

Before you sign up with a "private sale" website you need to read your estate agent's contract & make sure they haven't slipped in an "Exclusion of Private Internet Advertising" clause.

This clause would mean that even if you choose to advertise privately with a "private sale" website that has been approved by Trading Standards, you'll still have to pay the agent's fee.

If you find this clause in your "Sole Agency" agreement the estate agent will effectively have converted the contract into a "Sole Selling" agreement.

This could be considered to be in breach of the Estate Agency Act 1979 (and other Trade Descriptions regulations), if he is referring to the agreement as "Sole Agency".

This is an underhand tactic and you would do well to have the clause taken-out or simply go elsewhere.

A Few Final Words on Etiquette

To maintain good working relations, I would recommend you let your agent know (before you sign contracts) that you intend to use a private sale website.

Be wary of the agent that puts up too much of a fuss. If they have confidence in their ability to find you a buyer then they will welcome the challenge.

Another point you should be aware of is that some agents have

large paranoia about sellers and buyers colluding against them.

Make it clear to your agent that if you end up selling privately to a buyer that they previously introduced....

You will honour their fee.

On the other hand, if you find a buyer and your agent attempts to take the credit, always ask to see documented evidence that the agent had at least:

**Sent property details to the buyer in question, or
Taken the buyer on a viewing of your property.**

Just having a buyer register their details with the agent is not enough (in my opinion) for an agent to claim that they've earned their fee.

Finally, it is one thing to take a proactive role in your sale. It is another thing to antagonise your estate agent so always use the "For Sale" board they provide.

Within the premium "multi-listing" marketing packages that "Private sale" websites provide a "For Sale" board will be included.

For the "Dual" method of selling, this board is not needed so you can save around £40 right off the bat - this will bring the cost of using a private sale website down to about £130 - £140.

Using the websites board in place of (or alongside) your estate agent's will have a negative impact on your agent's motivation and be at odds with the whole reason you're using "Dual" method in the first place.

How to Get Started

As soon as you've settled on an asking price, have a good set of digital photographs and have organised your [Home Information Pack](#) - sign up with a "private sale" website.

Doing this will:

**Increase the number of buyers your property is marketed to.
Focus the mind of your estate agent & make sure your sale is his #1
priority.**

**Help you to cheaply reserve the possibility of finding a buyer
privately & avoid having to pay your estate agent's fee.**

Within our website you will find a shortlist of the "private sale"
websites we've seen provide the best results and have been
cleared by Trading Standards.

[Private sale websites we know are safe to use!](#)

Wishing you complete success with your sale,

Gavin Brazg (Editor)

www.TheAdvisory.co.uk