

Press release – 15th May 2009

Conference triumph banishes the blues

More than 140 estate agents packed the prestigious Sandy Park Conference Centre in Exeter last week for the South West and Wales Independent Estate Agents' Conference.

The event replaced Westcountry **team**'s annual conference, usually for members only; but this year the event was opened up and extended to all independent estate agents throughout the South West and Wales.

Thought-provoking, informative, inspiring and entertaining, the event was hailed a major success by attendees, made up of **team** members and other independent estate agents from across the regions, who seized the invaluable opportunity to meet and compare notes, listen to top speakers and check out the latest specialist products and services at the trade stands.

A significantly up-beat mood gave the distinct feeling that the worst in the market was over. Indeed, a show of hands confirmed the universal belief that the market has improved since last year.

Following brief words of welcome from Steve Moir, chairman of Westcountry **team**, and former president of the NAEA (National Association of Estate Agents) Jim Atkins, who oversaw proceedings, the conference kicked off with an update from Peter Bolton-King, chief executive of NFOPP (National Federation of Property Professionals), on the latest crop of legislative challenges facing the industry. He also confirmed that NFOPP's planned introduction of a licensing scheme for lettings firms would be followed later this year by similar proposals for sales agents.

Next up on the podium was Jon Notley, sales director of The Digital Property Group, which owns www.findaproperty.com and www.primelocation.com, to talk about a new analytics tool. He was followed by top trainer and motivator Clare Fletcher; then Andy Crossman, chairman of The Property Auction Group, spoke about selling at auction and described the outstanding success of its latest event, held in Plymouth last month. Talks by David Smith, lettings legal specialist from Hampshire-based PainSmith solicitors and Steven Hayter of **team**'s conveyancing partner, My Home Move, concluded the informative part of the conference.

The afternoon ended on a real high note with a bravura performance by Jim Lawless, one of the most inspirational and sought-after business speakers in Europe.

Finally, Jim Atkins brought proceedings to a close and the attendees enjoyed a delicious buffet supper before going their separate ways feeling refreshed, re-invigorated, re-motivated and re-inspired.

Steve Moir, chairman of Westcountry **team**, said: "It was an excellent afternoon. The conference was informative, educational and entertaining and everyone enjoyed it. The general feeling of positivity in the market was pretty much universal and everyone is looking forward to the future."

Jason Baker, recruitment and retention director of **team** Association, said: "We intend this to be the first in a series of similar regional events around the UK, designed to get independent agents networking, learning from each other as well as the speakers, and checking out the latest industry tools and resources. With the recent raft of constant, significant changes in the marketplace, independent estate agents need more support than ever before and we hope our conferences will provide some help to those, which are often family firms, sole trader or partnership businesses."

The South West and Wales Independent Estate Agents' Conference 2009 was sponsored by Westcountry **team** in conjunction with The Digital Property Group, along with **team** Association and specialist software provider, Resource Techniques.

For further information or to register your interest for next year's South West and Wales Independent Estate Agents' Conference, contact Joanna Marshall at Westcountry **team** on 01395 233750.

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Images from the conference, and of Peter Bolton-King, chief executive, NFOPP

These and further digital images are available from bubblepr@mac.com

Notes to editors:

Westcountry **team** is part of **team** Association, the largest organisation for independent estate agents in the UK, with hundreds of members. Westcountry **team** covers Cornwall, Devon and West Dorset, and consists of 70+ members at this time, all of which work together to sell property for clients, and are actively committed to their nominated charity, Macmillan Cancer Support. **team**'s 'blue sky' image, with transparent **team** logo on a blue sky background reflects the association's and each individual agent's commitment to providing a clear, transparent service to their clients and conducting business in a straightforward, honest and professional way.

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