**Agents increase their digital spend nearly fivefold in Q1**

One of the UK’s largest providers of retail agency website and lead generation technology, Starberry has reported a 495% year-on-year increase in digital spend from their estate agent clients during the first quarter of 2021.

According to Co-Founder and CEO of Starberry, Ben Sellers, the increased digital spend is a reflection of a trend currently seen in the market of agents starting to transfer their spend from portals and their high street offices to growing their digital footprint. “The Covid-19 pandemic has forced the property industry to evolve and relook how and where they spend their marketing budget. In today’s environment, a business’s digital footprint has become increasingly more important, and we have seen the shift in estate agents putting more focus into growing their own online presence so that they are not as reliant on the portals for digital leads. As the new shop window, agents are spending more on their own websites, ensuring that they are optimising their lead capturing, lead generation and lead nurturing tools. We are also seeing agents increase their spend on their communication channels and digital marketing campaigns,” says Sellers.

He adds that while the majority of agents had some digital presence in the past, it was definitely not the prime focus it is today. “We have been in the digital sector for several decades and have always had to convince agents about the digital transformation we believed was coming, however, now we are inundated with agents who are realising the potential of their own websites and how leads generated from their own digital channels are actually better quality and cost less than portals,” Sellers comments. “Because agents were not focused on their own digital presence, they were heavily reliant on portals to generate leads. However, agents can achieve phenomenal results that rival those of the portals from their own websites via digital marketing and connecting their social media channels, email, chat and portal leads together in conjunction with their CRMs, to achieve a serious marketing ROI and true lead attribution.”

Sellers says that agents need to continue to innovate and develop alternative ways of generating business and leads within the ‘new normal’ of a digitally driven world. “Having a digital footprint is no longer an accessory, but rather a necessity,” Sellers concludes.

**-ENDS-**

**Editors’ Notes**

**Starberry**

Winner of ‘Best Large Supplier’ EA Masters 2021 award, Starberry is a global digital agency specialising in brand strategy, web design and digital marketing for estate agents, new homes developers, and the proptech industry in the UK and internationally. Their mission is to ‘Create Awesomeness and Deliver Results’, aiming to be the number one ‘lead generation powerhouse’ for the property industry.

**epropservices**

epropservices delivers technology services to the property industry through brands such as Starberry, a digital lead generation powerhouse, its membership organisation, The Guild of Property Professionals, and its global premium estate agency brand Fine & Country.