

The future is now for smart homes

The rising trend that's seeing people opt for virtual offices or changing working hours to save on travel time and increase productivity has resulted in greater demand from home-seekers for additional space for a home office or an additional room which can be converted into office space. This is according to Craig Hutchison, CEO of Engel & Völkers Southern Africa.



The markets have been influenced by this trend in such a big way, that the infrastructure of the suburb of choice plays a big factor when deciding where you are to call home. Areas where optic fibre is already available, have seen an increase in property values. This also plays a vital role in the value of your property when looking to sell at a later stage.

Most people have a natural fear of change and tend to be sceptical of new trends, especially considering the innovative technology we need to learn and keep up with regularly. However, once we embrace it and actually see how we benefit from these concepts, we move forward wondering how we ever got on without them. The next big change which it will bring, and has already in some cases, is 'smart homes'. Although we have all heard the term, it is still fairly a new concept in SA homes with only a few having fully implemented its features and benefits.

"Buyers are seeking homes with built-in cost-saving features and they are prepared to pay a premium, knowing that their new home is equipped with modern, energy saving appliances. Property owners are advised to consider the options available in such devices and implement changes which would financially benefit them immediately, and should their home go on the market, it will be all the more attractive and assure them of a quick sale," notes Hutchison.

Home automation

Home automation is fast becoming one of the biggest trends in making our homes smarter. You can command virtually any system and device at anytime from anywhere, automating any item that uses electrical power. Managing your home from your smartphone or tablet with one touch will become the norm and it is worthwhile investigating for any future changes you make.

In many cases, automating your home requires no modifications to its infrastructure, not even a single hole needs to be drilled and is completely wireless. To start the process you'll need to look at what you want to automate and choose your level of automation, from basic lighting or security systems and as your budget allows, the addition of other areas which your lifestyle might require.

Although some of these smart home features are luxuries which many homeowners might deem unnecessary, times have changed and more and more people are working from home – which means that some features have become a necessity. Automating your home can benefit your business or working environment.

The most common smart home features on the market currently include security systems, automated sprinklers, entertainment and music centres and, of course, heating and cooling systems. Imagine a fridge creating its own shopping list, a washing machine which can be turned on or off whilst at the office or even kitchen counter tops which could give you a list of recipes depending on the ingredients taken out – although this sounds like a dream, it is already a reality.

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