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# Paving the Way

A commitment to developing lifetime relationships with clients is what sets LITTLE Real Estate apart from its competitors in the property market.

Images courtesy of LITTLE Real Estate

**L**ITTLE Real Estate is Australia's largest independently owned real estate agency. It offers a fully integrated property services solution, with offices in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth.

*The CEO Magazine* had a chat with CEO Phil Meggs about what makes LITTLE Real Estate special and stand out as a major player in the industry.

**The CEO Magazine:** What are the overriding principles the business has, and how are these instilled in your staff?

**Phil:** We want to be different to what people expect from real estate agents. They generally don't have a great reputation—a lot of people would describe agents as shonky or money grabbing. We want to be different and to be proud of it.

We have the professionalism, which is one of the things seen as lacking in the industry as a whole. We have a passion for the industry and for making a difference. Honesty is a really critical thing for us too. We want to apply common sense. Not everything has to be black and white.

Probably the most important thing about our business is that we think

**"Our vision is to really build lifetime relationships with our clients to deliver better results."**

- Phil Meggs

caring is a critical part of it. Our business isn't about property on its own; it's about people and property. Our employees have got to care about what they do, care that this is somebody's life and home that they're dealing with. Whether they own the property, are selling it, buying it, renting it, or it's their investment, our team have got to care about what they think. That's probably where we see ourselves as being different from others—we're not solely interested in just the transaction.

**What is behind LITTLE Real Estate's philosophy to sell possibilities rather than property?**

What we're trying to do is match people to what it is they're looking for. Generally, people are looking for a lifestyle choice. They aspire to live in an area and in a type of property—everybody wants the best they can get. So we're looking at how we can assist their buying and keep them within their own means. Selling is not only about getting the highest price; it's about the flexibility and the right fit.

**How does the business work to look after its loyal customer base?**

Our vision is to really build lifetime relationships with our clients to deliver better results. From the time they first move out

of home and rent a property, to the time they buy their first investment or buy a family home, we want to have that relationship all the way through. We're there to advise them as somebody they can trust.

**What gives LITTLE Real Estate its competitive edge?**

We believe we can be different by taking a long-term view. We're not just interested in the next transaction; we're interested in how the industry as a whole can change, and how we can leverage a better relationship to deliver better service.

Furthermore, we have a scale, being a national business, which allows us to invest in our people, systems, technology, and innovation. We can be consistent across the country, give incredible service, and at the same time we can invest in the training of our people and offer them career opportunities. We have the structure, innovation, and technology to really give power to the team to provide better services to the people they deal with. We put people at the heart of what we do.

**What plans are in place to become a leader in the Australian property market?**

It comes back to delivering a higher standard of service. We are >



currently introducing a customer-care model, which means we have extended hours of operation for tenants, clients, and people who want to find out information 24 hours a day. Rather than being reliant on when the office opens, we want to provide a way to meet the needs of customers and clients at pretty much any hour of the day.

Instead of just automating services and putting technology in, which removes the relationship, we will be putting people in between so we can provide the service. The experience is based on providing that customer a service rather than just an outcome.

We are trying to develop new services—innovative ones—which are different to what everybody

has been doing for the past 30, 40, or 50 years.

**How does the company work with key suppliers and other partners to achieve success?**

It's critical for us that they share the same vision for customer service and professionalism. We're interested in working with people whom we can have long-term relationships with and who can deliver for our clients and add value. If they're not adding value, then we will find another supplier to do that.

It's more important that we bring our professional business knowledge to what we do. That ensures our clients get the best deal possible—not whether there's a financial incentive at the end of it. So we are working hand in hand with them. We're not looking for the short-term gain but the long-term relationship that makes a viable business. Delivering for our client is the most important part.

**What growth has LITTLE Real Estate experienced since it was first conceived by Paul Little in 2009?**

The business really started to pick up in 2009, and there has been significant growth to become the largest privately owned real estate business in Australia. In the past five or so years, there have been a number of acquisitions, and the future is to continue to grow but through better customer service and the delivery of a better outcome.

We will continue to acquire strategically as we enter new markets, but at the same time we've got to ensure that we have the infrastructure, services, and innovation. Our aim is to be able to open the doors at 8 o'clock in the morning and have two lines of people—one of clients who want our services and one of people who would like to come and work for us. If we can achieve this, then the growth is up to us rather than being subject to the market all the time. ●

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- Phil Meggs

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