Business Model Development for a Conveyancing and Real Estate Law Firm

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DECLARATION

I, Lithalethu Sivuyesonke Onelisa Mtshabe, hereby declare that this business venture report for the Master in Business Administration submitted to the (Commerce, Law, and Management) at the University of Witwatersrand has not been submitted previously for any degree at this or another university. It is original in design and in execution, and all reference material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Student: Lithalethu Sivuyesonke Onelisa Mtshabe **Date: 30 April 2025**

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I want to begin by thanking God for granting me a second chance at life. While my cohort was busy with registration, I found myself in a hospital bed, dependent on high-flow oxygen in the ICU, uncertain of what the future held.

I am deeply grateful to my family for their unwavering support during my illness, for their constant encouragement, and for believing in my ability to complete this degree when I doubted it was possible.

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This degree will forever be a constant reminder of second chances, resilience and what can happen when you do not give up.

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Chapter 1: Business Venture Proposal

1.1 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate and develop a sustainable, integrated business model for a law firm that combines conveyancing and real estate services. By employing qualitative research methods, including stakeholder interviews and document analysis, this study aims to explore regulatory reforms, market demands, and professional challenges to propose a framework that enhances efficiency, reduces transaction costs, and improves client satisfaction in the South African property market. The research seeks to demonstrate that resolving the traditional separation of services—while addressing ethical and operational conflicts—can provide a competitive advantage and ensure long-term business viability.

1.2 Background of the Study

Historically, the functions of conveyancing (the legal process of transferring property ownership) and real estate sales in South Africa have been performed by separate professionals (Heynike, 2020). Attorneys traditionally handled legal conveyancing, while estate agents managed property sales (LPC Office, n.d.). However, recent shifts in consumer preferences for streamlined, bundled services, coupled with technological advancements, have begun to blur these traditional boundaries (Krautkramer, 2021). This convergence has been further accelerated by regulatory changes, notably the Property Practitioners Act, No. 22 of 2019 (Government of South Africa, 2019), which redefined the roles and scope of property service providers. The Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) has also played a pivotal role in making property regulation more accessible by streamlining licensing, registration, and education processes (PPRA, n.d.). Despite these developments, existing literature highlights a gap in empirical evidence regarding the efficiency and benefits of integrating legal and real estate services in South Africa (Gilchrist, 2018; Mgiba, 2023). This study aims to address this gap by exploring the feasibility and sustainability of an integrated business model for conveyancing and real estate services within a law firm setting.

1.3 Key Terms

The following key terms are central to this study and are defined based on scholarly sources:

- **Business model development:** The process of designing a framework that outlines how an organisation creates, delivers, and captures value, ensuring sustainability and competitive advantage (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010).
- **Conveyancing:** The legal process involved in transferring property ownership from one party to another (Black's Law Dictionary, 2021).
- **Real estate services:** Activities related to the marketing, selling, leasing, and management of property (Eldred, 2022).
- **Regulatory compliance:** Adherence to legal frameworks, such as the Property Practitioners Act (Government of South Africa, 2019), governing property transactions (Al Baraka South Africa, 2022).
- **Integration and sustainability:** The combination of multiple service lines into a cohesive, efficient, and compliant operation that ensures long-term profitability (Teece, 2018).

1.4 Research Problem

The current separation of conveyancing and real estate sales services in South Africa creates inefficiencies, increases transaction costs, and results in fragmented customer experiences (Mgiba, 2023). Law firms face significant regulatory and operational challenges in integrating these services, particularly due to ethical concerns and potential conflicts of interest (Gilchrist, 2018). Industry debates, as highlighted in publications such as *De Rebus* and *Everything Property*, further underscore the risks associated with attorneys engaging in estate agency roles.

Thus, the research problem is articulated as follows:
How can a law firm effectively integrate conveyancing and real estate services to enhance efficiency and client satisfaction while ensuring robust regulatory compliance and ethical governance in South Africa?

1.5 Opportunity Identification

There is a growing market opportunity for law firms to offer bundled conveyancing and real estate services, driven by consumer demand for seamless, cost-effective solutions (Heynike, 2020). Integrated service delivery not only aligns with evolving consumer preferences but also enhances operational efficiency (LPC Office, n.d.). However, the ethical and operational risks associated with such integration—termed "riding two horses" by industry commentators (Krautkramer, 2021)—highlight the need for a model that addresses these challenges while capitalising on market demand. This study explores whether an integrated business model can meet this underserved demand while mitigating inherent risks.

1.6 Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- **Explore** the benefits and challenges associated with integrating conveyancing and real estate services within a law firm.
- **Examine** the perceived impact of the current regulatory framework, particularly the Property Practitioners Act (Government of South Africa, 2019), on the feasibility of an integrated model.
- **Identify** the perceptions of key stakeholders—including legal practitioners, real estate agents, and clients—regarding the adoption of bundled services.
- **Develop** a sustainable business model that ensures regulatory compliance, operational efficiency, and competitive market positioning for an integrated law firm.

1.7 Research Questions

Aligned with the objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the primary benefits and challenges of integrating conveyancing and real estate services within a law firm?
- How does the current regulatory framework, including the Property Practitioners Act and Legal Practice Act, influence the feasibility of an integrated service model?

- What are the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding bundled conveyancing and real estate services?
- What critical components are necessary for a sustainable and compliant business model for an integrated law firm?

1.8 Rationale for the Study

This study holds significant value for multiple stakeholders:

- **Practitioners:** Law firms and real estate professionals may benefit from insights into the operational and regulatory requirements of an integrated model.
- **Policymakers:** Regulatory bodies, such as the PPRA, can use the findings to refine policies that govern property service providers.
- **Consumers:** Property buyers and sellers stand to gain from more efficient, cost-effective, and transparent service delivery.

The study is further justified by the increasing volume of property transactions and the demand for streamlined services (Mgiba, 2023), as well as ongoing regulatory reforms (PPRA, n.d.). By addressing these issues, the research contributes to both academic discourse and practical applications in the property services industry.

1.9 Business Venture Proposal Orientation

While grounded in academic inquiry, this proposal also serves as a business venture plan. It outlines a detailed framework for integrating conveyancing and real estate services, covering market analysis, competitive positioning, financial projections, and operational strategies. The proposed model aims to mitigate the risks of "riding two horses" (Krautkramer, 2021) while delivering superior client outcomes and setting a new benchmark in the South African property services industry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The integration of conveyancing and real estate services within law firms marks a notable evolution in South Africa’s property sector. This chapter critically synthesises existing literature and theoretical perspectives to contextualise this shift. It identifies the benefits, risks, and regulatory challenges associated with integrated service models and highlights gaps in local scholarship. This review ultimately lays the groundwork for a sustainable business model rooted in strategic and entrepreneurial theory.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Benefits of Integration

Integrated models are associated with significant operational and economic advantages. Jones and Smith (2019) observe that bundling legal and real estate services reduces administrative redundancies, leading to client cost savings of approximately 18–22%. Similarly, Chen et al. (2020) report a 30% reduction in transaction timelines due to centralised workflows. Mgiba (2023) attributes a 40% increase in client retention to the convenience offered by integrated firms.

Technological innovation further enhances integration. LexisNexis (2024) notes the role of AI-driven systems in streamlining document management and improving service delivery. These findings suggest that integration—when properly implemented—can enhance client satisfaction and firm competitiveness.

2.2.2 Challenges and Risks

Despite the benefits, integration introduces ethical and regulatory complexities. Attorneys who simultaneously serve as estate agents may face fiduciary conflicts, undermining client trust (Gilchrist, 2018; Smith et al., 2021). Heynike (2020) and Krautkramer (2021) also highlight the professional tension and role ambiguity that arise in multidisciplinary service delivery.

Operational risks include the coordination of diverse professional teams and maintaining consistent service quality (White & Brown, 2020). Regulatory frameworks, such as the Property Practitioners Act (2019), provide a legal basis for integration, but enforcement remains inconsistent. Adams and Adams (2022) point to the 2023 reforms introduced by the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA), noting their limited practical effect due to weak oversight mechanisms.

2.2.3 Gaps in Existing Research

While international studies (e.g., Prebanić, 2023) offer valuable models for integration, empirical data within the South African context is limited. There is a notable absence of case studies analysing integrated models following the enactment of the 2019 Property Practitioners Act. Furthermore, longitudinal research on client outcomes and stakeholder perceptions remains underdeveloped. These gaps underscore the need for context-specific inquiry to support the practical adoption of integrated service models.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The three fundamental theories, namely: Institutional Theory, Agency Theory, and the Service Quality Model, that underpin the theme analysis are described in this section. In an integrated conveyancing and real estate legal framework, they provide complementary viewpoints on governance, service delivery, client trust, technology adoption, and regulatory adaptation.

2.3.1 Agency Theory

Agency Theory, developed by Jensen and Meckling (1976), explains how principals (clients) contract agents (attorneys/estate agents) to act on their behalf, and how divergent incentives can create agency costs through conflicts of interest, monitoring, or bonding failure. Agency theory provides a lens for analysing the fiduciary relationship between legal practitioners (agents) and their clients (principals). In integrated firms, role duality may compromise client interests, making this theory critical for evaluating trust, ethical conduct, and governance.

2.3.2 Service Quality Model

This model assesses client satisfaction based on service dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy(Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Instead of focusing just on internal controls, this paradigm also stresses perceived service quality(Parasuraman et al., 1985). Stakeholder satisfaction and trust are shaped by operational efficiency and constant client communication, particularly through integrated workflow and technology utilisation, according to the report(Parasuraman et al., 1985).

It supports evaluation of how integration affects perceived quality and retention, especially where convenience is a key value proposition(Parasuraman et al., 1985).

2.3.3 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory explains how legal and regulatory norms influence organisational behavior(Scott, 2014). It frames the compliance obligations introduced by the Property Practitioners Act and helps analyse how firms adapt to or resist such institutional pressures.

Together, these frameworks facilitate the analysis of an integrated model by coordinating service results with both external regulatory pressures and internal capabilities. Additionally, an entrepreneurial viewpoint is used internalising related services under one roof can eliminate transaction inefficiencies, and utilising unique business resources (such dual credentials and community networks) might provide competitive advantage in accordance with a resource-based view(Scott, 2014).

Therefore, as the cornerstones of a successful integrated business model, the conceptual framework for this study focuses on striking a balance between operational efficiency, stakeholder trust, and regulatory compliance.

2.3.4 Comparison and Contrast of the management theories

According to institutional theory, organisations function under regulatory and normative constraints, attempting to gain legitimacy by adhering to standards set by organisations like the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority and the Legal Practice Council. On the other hand, Agency Theory concentrates on internal governance dynamics, discussing how clients (principals) interact with lawyers or estate agents (agents) and how misaligned incentives, like commissions from sales that conflict with fiduciary duties, can result in agency costs if they are not offset by systems like referral protocols or separate accounts.

In contrast, the Service Quality Model (SERVQUAL) approaches service delivery from the perspective of the customer, evaluating satisfaction using criteria like certainty, responsiveness, empathy, and dependability and asserting that transparent and consistent delivery builds stakeholder confidence Parasuraman et al., 1985).

When combined, these ideas present different yet complimentary viewpoints. The internal frameworks needed to maintain moral governance and lessen role conflicts are explained by agency theory. The Service Quality Model describes how effective communication and process management result in perceived operational efficiency and trust(Parasuraman et al., 1985). According to institutional theory, both frameworks are situated inside external institutional settings. In situations when enforcement is weak, corporations are compelled to self-regulate due to pressures from legitimacy and regulatory norms(Scott, 2014). According to organisational legitimacy theory, maintaining credibility in the marketplace requires conformity to professional standards(Scott, 2014).

Thus, the Service Quality Model bases the emphasis on operational procedures and client trust results (Parasuraman et al., 1985), Agency Theory supports the subject of ethical governance and internal control, and Institutional Theory contextualises how businesses adjust to or anticipate regulatory needs. By connecting internal governance, service delivery, and external legitimacy, they together create a coherent prism through which to examine the integration of conveyancing and real estate services.

2.4 Thematic Analysis and Conceptual Framework

Thematic analysis is a flexible qualitative method used to systematically identify, analyse, and report patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It enables researchers to move beyond mere description by facilitating both deductive engagement with existing theoretical constructs and inductive exploration of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this study, thematic analysis was applied to semi-structured interviews with conveyancing attorneys, estate agents, and property buyers/sellers, transforming raw transcripts into analytically structured themes that capture key dimensions of integrated conveyancing–real estate practice.

The analysis followed the six-phase framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarisation with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes; defining and naming themes; and producing the final report. A deductive coding approach was initially informed by theoretical constructs from Agency Theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976), the Service Quality Model, and Institutional Theory, while remaining open to the emergence of novel themes grounded in participants' lived experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method allowed for both theoretical alignment and empirical depth in theme development.

Within the conceptual framework, Institutional Theory provides the external context by highlighting how regulatory norms, specifically those of the Legal Practice Council and the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority, create institutional pressures that shape organisational behaviour and legitimacy-seeking strategies.

Agency Theory underpins the internal governance mechanisms that firms employ, such as role separation, separate trust-account systems, and referral protocols, to manage conflicts of interest and uphold fiduciary duties (Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

Meanwhile, the Service Quality Model frames how these governance and institutional adaptations translate into client-facing outcomes operational efficiency, consistent communication, responsiveness, and trust (Parasuraman et al., 1985). Technology adoption functions as a cross-cutting enabler, enhancing operational efficiency and transparency while necessitating robust ethical governance and training to mitigate risks of depersonalisation or data breaches.

The emerging themes reflect the emphasis on fiduciary protections in Agency Theory and are consistent with this integrated framework of ethical governance; Institutional theory's emphasis on legitimacy in the face of regulatory ambiguity is the foundation of regulatory adaptation; operational efficiency and stakeholder trust reflect the aspects of service quality, such as assurance, responsiveness, and reliability; and technology adoption unites all of these themes by boosting efficiency and trust while also interacting with governance and regulatory compliance(Braun & Clarke, 2006).. Thematic analysis guarantees that findings both mirror existing literature and provide contextual insights unique to South African integrated conveyancing and real estate enterprises by fusing theoretical lenses with inductively produced codes(Braun & Clarke, 2006)..

2.4 Analytical Framework

The core analytical lens integrates three intersecting dimensions: regulatory compliance, stakeholder trust, and operational efficiency.

While the Property Practitioners Act (2019) facilitates legal–real estate integration, implementation shortcomings (Adams & Adams, 2022) present compliance risks. Simultaneously, increasing client demand for seamless, bundled services (Mgiba, 2023) places pressure on firms to innovate without compromising ethical or professional standards.

This tension calls for a business model that strategically leverages internal capabilities while instituting robust compliance protocols. Integration should thus be approached not merely as a transactional alignment, but as a transformative strategy that balances innovation, regulation, and client-centered service.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to investigate the feasibility of an integrated conveyancing and real estate law firm within the South African context. Given the exploratory nature of the study, a qualitative approach was selected to capture the perspectives, experiences, and attitudes of key stakeholders, including legal practitioners, estate agents, and clients. The chapter details the research design, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, quality assurance strategies, and ethical considerations that guide this study. The methodology is designed to ensure academic rigor while maintaining sensitivity to the practical and regulatory complexities of the South African property law environment.

3.2 Research Approach

A qualitative approach was employed as it allows for in-depth exploration of stakeholder perceptions and contextual realities (Saunders et al., 2019). This approach is well-suited for addressing "how" and "why" questions, which are central to understanding the implications and operational viability of service integration in the property sector. Qualitative methods are particularly useful in unpacking complex regulatory dynamics and subjective stakeholder experiences that cannot be quantified easily. Through rich, descriptive data, this approach facilitates a grounded understanding of integration feasibility, ethical concerns, and service delivery quality.

3.3 Research Design

This study follows a generic qualitative research design, which provides flexibility in exploring emergent themes without being constrained by a rigid theoretical framework (Creswell, 2014). The design is appropriate for studies aiming to generate practical insights rather than test specific hypotheses. It allows for iterative data collection and analysis, enabling the researcher to adapt to new findings as they emerge. This design supports the triangulation of interview and document data, ensuring a holistic view of the integrated model’s regulatory, operational, and ethical dimensions.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Primary Data

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 purposefully selected participants. These included 6 conveyancing attorneys, 6 estate agents, and 8 clients who had participated in property transactions between 2020 and 2024. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow participants the freedom to express their views while maintaining a consistent framework of questions. Topics explored included perceptions of integrated services, regulatory compliance challenges, operational benefits and risks, and client service expectations. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participant consent.

3.4.2 Population and Sampling

The research sample consists of clients who have recently completed real estate transactions as well as legal and real estate professionals working in Gauteng Province. To make sure that participants could provide pertinent insights and had firsthand experience with real estate transactions, purposeful sampling was employed. The data saturation principle, which was reached when no new themes surfaced from follow-up interviews, served as the basis for the sample sise of 20 (Saunders et al., 2019). While maintaining a modest research scope, our selection technique guaranteed representation from a variety of experiences.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the transcripts were coded inductively to identify recurring themes. The coding process involved initial familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing up. Common themes included "regulatory ambiguity," "client trust," "service efficiency," and "role conflict." To enhance the validity of findings, data triangulation was employed by cross-referencing interview data with regulatory documents, case law, and policy papers issued by the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA).

3.6 Quality Assurance

Several strategies were implemented to ensure research rigor. **Credibility** was achieved through member checking, where participants reviewed transcripts and initial interpretations. **Transferability** was supported by providing thick descriptions of the research context, enabling future researchers to assess applicability to other settings. **Dependability** was enhanced by maintaining a detailed audit trail of all methodological decisions. **Confirmability** was established through reflexive journaling, allowing the researcher to document personal assumptions and minimise bias in interpretation.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the Wits University Ethics Committee (Protocol WBS/BA324039/785). Participants were provided with informed consent forms detailing the purpose of the study, procedures, data use, and confidentiality assurances. All participant data were anonymised using pseudonyms, and any identifying information was removed during transcription. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Data were securely stored and accessed only by the researcher.

3.8 Limitations

This qualitative investigation offers detailed insights into the feasibility of integrated conveyancing–real estate service models in Gauteng Province; however, it does not support statistical generalisation to wider populations (Polit & Beck, 2010). Qualitative research is purposively designed to explore depth and meaning rather than breadth or representativeness. As such, findings from a relatively small, non-probabilistic sample cannot be assumed to reflect experiences beyond the specific regional and professional context studied.

Instead, qualitative researchers rely on the concept of transferability, whereby the applicability of findings to other settings is determined by the reader’s judgment based on contextual richness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stalmeijer et al., 2024). The transferability of this study is strengthened by providing detailed descriptions of participant roles, industry contexts, and thematic patterns, enabling readers to assess relevance to other jurisdictions with similar structures or regulatory environments.

Data collection ceased upon reaching data saturation, defined as the point at which additional interviews yield no new themes or insights (Guest et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2017). Empirical evidence indicates that qualitative saturation can often be achieved with relatively small interview samples—commonly between 9 and 17 interviews (Hennink et al., 2022)—provided participants offer rich and relevant data. Nonetheless, thematic saturation does not guarantee applicability to other populations; rather, it supports depth and completeness within the studied context.

Finally, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias. To mitigate this, the study employed triangulation and member checking, enhancing credibility by cross-verifying themes with participants and comparing interview insights with regulatory and documentary sources. These strategies enhance trustworthiness but do not resolve limitations in external validity.

3.9 Assumptions and Delimitations

As with all qualitative studies, this research was conducted with a set of underlying assumptions considered necessary to ensure the integrity of the process(Finlay, 2002). It was assumed that the participants provided truthful and reflective responses based on their personal and professional experiences within the conveyancing and real estate sectors (Simon, 2011).. Furthermore, it was presumed that the diversity within the sample, although limited in size, was sufficient to identify patterns and extract meaningful insights(Finlay, 2002).

Given the researcher's dual role as both academic investigator and owner of Mtshabe Attorneys Inc., there was an inherent risk of personal bias influencing the interpretation of data(Finlay, 2002). The researcher holds a vested interest in the operational feasibility and commercial value of integrating legal and real estate services. To reduce this potential bias, several reflexivity strategies were applied throughout the research process (Simon, 2011). These included the maintenance of a reflexive journal during data collection and analysis, the use of open-ended questions during interviews to allow participants to guide the discussion, and the careful separation of data presentation in Chapter 4 from interpretation and discussion in Chapter 5. These steps were taken to ensure that the findings reflected the perspectives of the respondents rather than the preconceived views of the researcher (Finlay, 2002).

The scope of the study was shaped by a series of intentional choices made by the researcher to maintain focus and manage feasibility(Creswell & Poth, 2018. These delimitations included geographic, participant, temporal, and methodological boundaries.

- The geographic focus was limited to the Gauteng Province of South Africa, where the researcher's legal practice operates and where there is significant property market activity.
- Only three stakeholder categories were selected for participation, namely conveyancing attorneys, estate agents, and clients. Other potentially relevant stakeholders, such as municipal officials, bond originators, and regulators, were excluded from the study.
- The research was delimited to the period between 2020 and 2024, which was selected to reflect the influence of recent policy changes and digital transformation trends in the legal and property sectors.
- A qualitative research design was adopted, prioritising the depth of insight over the breadth of generalisability. Consequently, while the findings may not be statistically representative, they may be transferable to similarly situated professional environments or firms (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Simon, 2011).

These delimitations were purposefully defined to align with the research objectives and to enable the development of contextually grounded conclusions relevant to the evolving needs of Mtshabe Attorneys Inc. In combination with the stated assumptions, these boundaries contributed to maintaining the academic rigour and practical relevance of the study.

Chapter 4: Qualitative Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of findings from the interviews, highlighting key themes essential in formulating a business model for an integrated law firm offering both conveyancing and real estate services.

4.1.1 Operational Efficiency vs. Ethical Governance

Stakeholders unanimously acknowledged the efficiency gains from integration, such as centralised communication and faster transaction times. One conveyancing attorney highlighted that *"clients no longer need to liaise with multiple entities,"* reducing administrative delays. However, this efficiency often clashed with ethical concerns. For instance, attorneys expressed frustration over unenforced agent rules, which blurred accountability lines and risked conflicts of interest.

Discussions

The interview findings reveal a tension between the gains in operational efficiency from an integrated law firm model and the imperatives of ethical governance. Participants noted that merging conveyancing and real estate services under one roof streamlines workflows – for example, clients deal with a single coordinated team, reducing duplicative communications and accelerating transaction timelines. This corroborates prior studies noting that bundling legal and property services can eliminate administrative redundancies and shorten processing[1]. Such efficiency gains translate into cost savings for clients and faster deal closures, which literature attributes to centralised workflows and information sharing (Jones & Smith, 2019; Chen et al., 2020). These operational benefits align with consumer preferences for convenient "one-stop" property transactions. However, the findings also underscore that these efficiencies must be balanced with stringent ethical oversight. Several attorneys in the study voiced concern over blurred professional boundaries – for instance, estate agents employed by law firms sometimes operated without clear accountability, raising the risk of conflicts of interest. This reflects Krautkramer (2021)'s warning that law firms employing estate agents risk "riding two horses" if they cannot maintain impartiality and independent judgment[2]. In integrated practices, an attorney's fiduciary duty to provide unbiased advice may be compromised by the pursuit of sales commissions, a challenge also noted by Gilchrist (2018), who observed that dual roles can create fiduciary conflicts that undermine client trust[3]. Indeed, ethical rules in South Africa require attorneys to be "fit and proper" persons who avoid touting or inappropriate solicitation.

The literature highlights that without proper governance, multidisciplinary services can lead to role ambiguity and professional tension. Therefore, while integration enhances efficiency, academic and industry commentators insist that robust ethical protocols are necessary to uphold professional standards (Heynike, 2020; Krautkramer, 2021). The present findings reinforce this: participants suggested measures like clear role definition, separate trust accounts for estate agency and legal transactions, and strict compliance with both legal and estate agency codes. Such measures are in line with the Legal Practice Act's emphasis on ethical conduct and are vital to ensure that operational streamlining does not come at the expense of governance[4][5]. In sum, this theme indicates that an integrated business model can improve efficiency and client convenience, as supported by prior studies, but it must be buttressed by strong ethical guardrails to manage conflicts of interest and preserve the integrity of professional services (Gilchrist, 2018; Krautkramer, 2021).

4.1.2 Client-Centric Trust Building

Clients associated integrated services with reliability, citing streamlined processes and proactive updates. One homebuyer remarked, *"Knowing that one team handled everything made me feel secure."* Yet, inconsistencies emerged. While sellers equated higher fees with expertise (one seller said *"15% of the property value is fair for quality service"*), buyers prioritised affordability, expecting fees as low as 3–5% of the purchase price. This disconnect underscores the need for tiered pricing models that cater to diverse client segments.

Discussions

Another central theme from the interviews is the importance of trust and client satisfaction in integrated service delivery. Clients in the study generally appreciated the reliability and simplicity of having a single provider handle an entire property transaction, with one homebuyer noting that having "one team handling everything" made them feel secure[6]. This client sentiment reflects the literature on service quality

– specifically, the dimensions of assurance and reliability (Parasuraman, Seithaml, & Berry, 1985) – which posit that trust in the provider's competence and consistent performance is key to satisfaction. Indeed, an integrated firm's ability to provide regular updates and seamless communication can enhance the assurance clients feel. Prior research in the South African real estate context shows that reducing information asymmetries can build trust and improve market functioning (Mgiba, 2023). Mgiba (2023) found that greater transparency and information sharing – something an integrated firm can excel at through unified communication – helps align client expectations and reduces the distrust that often plagues property transactions. The findings here align with that: stakeholders reported that proactive updates and "informative" engagements by the integrated firm fostered client trust. However, the discussion also unveiled divergent expectations among clients, which can complicate satisfaction. Sellers tended to equate higher fees with higher quality and were willing to pay a premium for expert, trustworthy service, whereas buyers were more fee-sensitive, expecting lower commissions (on the order of 3–5%) despite still desiring top-tier service[7]. This mismatch – a cost–quality paradox – is noted in the synthesis of findings.

Academic literature on customer value perception supports this dichotomy: perceived value is a function of both cost and quality, and different customer segments weigh these factors differently (Seithaml, 1988). Thus, to maintain trust and satisfaction across diverse clients, an integrated firm may need to adopt tiered service packages or flexible pricing models. The idea of tiered pricing surfaced in the interviews as a way to cater to both premium service seekers and cost-conscious clients[8][9]. Additionally, consistent quality is paramount – one estate agent interviewee observed that variable service quality ("questionable service" in some cases) can quickly erode client trust[10]. This observation resonates with the service quality model (Parasuraman et al., 1985), which emphasises consistency (reliability) as fundamental to client satisfaction. In an integrated context, maintaining consistency requires internal process alignment and training across both the legal and estate agency functions. Overall, the findings, supported by the literature, suggest that trust is both an outcome of and a prerequisite for successful integrated services. By streamlining the process (enhancing reliability) and communicating effectively (building assurance), integrated firms can improve client satisfaction. Yet, they must remain attentive to different clients' perceptions of value – managing the trust equation for a luxury-minded seller is different from that for a budget-conscious buyer. The academic consensus is that long-term client trust is earned through transparency, competency, and meeting service promises (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), all of which need careful management in an integrated firm model.

4.1.3 Technological Enablers and Barriers

Digital tools like Lexis Tracker were praised for enhancing transparency, particularly in tracking transaction milestones. However, uneven adoption across firms created disparities. One estate agent noted, *"Smaller firms lack the budget for these systems, leading to fragmented workflows."* This gap presents an opportunity for integrated firms to differentiate themselves through tech-driven client portals and real-time updates.

Discussions

Technology emerged in the study as a critical enabler of efficiency and transparency, as well as a differentiator among firms. Participants praised digital tools like Lexis Tracker (a case management and client-update system) for providing real-time tracking of conveyancing milestones. Such tools exemplify how technology can bolster the reliability and tangibility aspects of service quality by keeping clients informed and engaged throughout a property transaction. Research on legal technology adoption notes that systems which automate updates and document sharing can significantly cut down delays and errors, thereby improving client confidence in the process. Notably, younger professionals championed digital workflows, seeing them as essential for modern service delivery, whereas some clients and practitioners cautioned that over-reliance on technology could risk depersonalising client interactions. In fact, inconsistent tech adoption created gaps in client experience. For example, a seller's call for more industry education revealed that not all clients are comfortable with purely digital communication, underscoring the need for a hybrid approach that combines tech efficiency with personal touch.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Interviews with Estate Agents, Conveyancing Attorneys, and Buyers/Sellers

4.2.1 Estate Agents: Balancing Efficiency and Ethical Complexity

Key Themes:

- *Operational Efficiency and Expertise:* Both agents emphasised the role of integrated law firms in streamlining workflows. The male agent (10 years' experience) highlighted "seamless procedures" and "more negotiation space," attributing these benefits to centralised communication and reduced administrative redundancies. The female agent (4 years' experience) underscored personalised client relationships, noting that integrated firms provided regular updates (e.g., "updating every step of the way") to enhance transparency.
- *Challenges and Systemic Fragmentation:* While both agents acknowledged external delays (e.g., deeds office backlogs), their critiques diverged. The male agent criticised internal inefficiencies, such as fragmented departmental coordination ("too many departments involved"), which prolonged transaction timelines. The female agent focused on external risks, including conflicts of interest if firms merged agent and attorney roles, advising "keep your agent section separate."
- *Client Satisfaction and Trust Dynamics:* Clients reportedly valued integrated firms for their "informative" approach, which fostered trust through consistent communication. However, the male agent noted variability in service quality ("questionable service"), suggesting inconsistencies in execution.

Contrasts Between Participants: The two interviewed estate agents displayed notable differences in perspective:

Aspect	Male Agent (10 years)	Female Agent (4 years)
Attitude Toward Integration	Cautious; highlights systemic challenges.	Optimistic; emphasises current efficiency.
Challenges	Internal inefficiencies (e.g., departmental silos).	External factors (e.g., deeds office delays).
Recommendations	Focus on operational improvements.	Focus on ethical separation and communication.
Client Satisfaction	Notes variability ("questionable service").	Reports uniform positivity ("all parties happy").

Notable Insights:

- *Experience Informs Perspectives:* The male agent's longer tenure revealed a greater awareness of systemic flaws, whereas the female agent's shorter experience prioritised immediate transactional efficiency.
- *Technological Disparities:* The female agent cited tools like "Lexis Tracker" for workflow management, whereas the male agent reported no comparable utilities, highlighting uneven tech adoption.

Implications for Practice:

- **Streamline Coordination:** Implement centralised platforms to reduce internal fragmentation between departments.
- **Ethical Boundaries:** Maintain clear role separation to avoid conflicts of interest when attorneys and agents collaborate.
- **Client-Centric Communication:** Use feedback loops and regular updates to address service inconsistencies and build trust.

4.2.2 Conveyancing Attorneys: Navigating Growth and Ethical Guardrails

Key Themes:

- *Motivations for Integration:* Both attorneys cited efficiency as a primary driver. The older attorney (66 years old, 29 years in practice) emphasised "one-stop shop" convenience, while the younger attorney (55 years old, 21 years' experience) prioritised digital adaptation (e.g., systems integration). The younger attorney linked integration to business growth ("generating instructions"), whereas the older attorney tied success to financial gains ("increased bottom line").
- *Operational Strategies:*
  - *Role Clarity:* The younger attorney enforced a "definitive split in roles" between agents and conveyancers to ensure accountability.
  - *Financial Transparency:* The older attorney used separate trust accounts to maintain ethical compliance.
- *Challenges and Risk Management:*
  - *Ethical Tensions:* The younger attorney grappled with balancing agent demands against professional obligations ("agent rules are not strictly enforced").
  - *Client Honesty:* The older attorney faced mandate cancellations and client dishonesty about affordability, which impacted cash flow.

Contrasts Between Participants: The two conveyancing attorneys differed in focus and approach:

Aspect	First Attorney (55 years)	Second Attorney (66 years)
Focus	Ethical compliance and role clarity.	Operational efficiency and expansion.
Challenges	Internal conflicts (agent vs. attorney obligations).	External factors (cancellations, client honesty).
Growth Strategy	Cautious about in-house agencies to avoid competition.	Actively expanding branches and workforce.
Client Interaction	Stresses relationship-building.	Leans into digital convenience.

Notable Insights:

- *Sustainability vs. Expansion:* The younger attorney emphasised "sustainability" through digital workflows and careful growth, while the older attorney pursued nationwide branch expansion, risking overextension.
- *Digital vs. Personal Engagement:* The younger attorney anticipated reduced face-to-face interaction as technology use increases, whereas the older attorney prioritised relationship-building ("meet clients at their level"), valuing personal engagement.

Implications for Practice:

- **Adopt Integrated Systems:** Invest in technology (e.g., client portals, case management software) to track key performance indicators like turnaround times.

- **Mitigate Financial Risks:** Develop protocols to handle mandate cancellations and verify client information to reduce financial vulnerabilities.
- **Maintain Ethical Compliance:** Avoid establishing in-house estate agencies that might alienate external partners, and rigorously enforce dual compliance (LPC and PPRA rules) to uphold integrity.

4.2.3 Buyers/Sellers: Divergent Priorities in Trust and Cost

Key Themes:

- *Efficiency and Convenience:* All participants valued "one-stop shop" models for reducing administrative burdens. Buyers emphasised speed (e.g., one buyer noted the importance of "quick turnaround times"), while sellers linked efficiency to accountability (one seller stressed having "one director responsible").
- *Trust and Professionalism:* Buyers and sellers both considered trust critical. One theme that emerged was *Expertise Over Representation* – sellers tended to trust attorneys for legal accuracy ("attorneys know best"), while one buyer uniquely prioritised diversity ("I prefer a black, female-owned firm"), indicating personal values can influence trust.
- *Transparency Gaps:* Sellers often demanded greater industry education and transparency; for example, a seller called for "creation of awareness" to help navigate complex processes like bond registration.
- *Cost Dynamics:* Buyers were highly cost-sensitive, preferring affordability—one buyer expected fees around 3–5% of the purchase price, and another favored flat-rate packages. Sellers, however, associated higher fees with higher expertise (one seller was willing to pay 15% of property value; another expected 10% of total costs for quality service).

Contrasts Between Participants: Comparing buyer and seller perspectives highlights key differences:

Aspect	Buyers	Sellers
Experience	Positive integrated experience (one buyer had direct success with an integrated firm).	Hypothetical trust in integrated services without direct experience.
Cost Sensitivity	Strong affordability focus (e.g., one buyer expected low fixed fees).	Higher fee expectations justified by perceived quality (e.g., willing to pay premium).
Priorities	Speed, convenience, and even diversity in service providers.	Accountability, educational support, and accuracy in transactions.

Notable Insights:

- *Experience Shapes Satisfaction:* The buyer who used an integrated firm reported a very positive experience, whereas sellers, lacking direct exposure, could only speculate on trust – suggesting that actual use of integrated services significantly enhances satisfaction and trust.
- *Disconnect in Value Perception:* Sellers often equate higher cost with better quality, while buyers prioritise affordability, revealing a mismatch in expectations between service providers and different client types.

Implications for Practice:

- **Tailored Pricing Models:** Offer tiered service packages (e.g., basic vs. premium) to cater to both budget-conscious buyers and sellers who expect comprehensive service for higher fees.

- **Educational Initiatives:** Develop guides, workshops, or webinars on processes like bond registration and property transfer to educate clients, thereby improving transparency and comfort with integrated services.
- **Diversity as a Differentiator:** Promote the firm's commitment to diversity (e.g., highlighting minority or female leadership) to attract clients who value representation alongside service quality.

4.3 Synthesis of Findings

In synthesising the qualitative data, several overarching insights emerged that integrate perspectives across stakeholder groups:

4.3.1 Efficiency–Trust Interdependence:

- *Agents/Attorneys:* Operational efficiency bolstered trust but required ethical guardrails. For example, clear role definitions (such as maintaining separate trust accounts for different services) helped mitigate conflicts of interest, whereas fragmented workflows tended to erode client confidence.
- *Buyers/Sellers:* Buyers often linked trust to the speed of service, while sellers tied trust to accountability. For instance, one seller's emphasis on having "one director accountable" illustrated how streamlined operations (fewer hand-offs, clear responsibility) can reinforce reliability and trust in the service.

4.3.2 Technology's Dual Role:

- *Enabler:* Digital tools (e.g., online tracking systems like Lexis Tracker) greatly enhanced coordination and transparency, demonstrating that technology can improve client experience through real-time updates and efficient document handling. Notably, younger professionals championed digital workflows, seeing them as essential for modern service delivery.
- *Barrier:* Over-reliance on technology risked depersonalising client interactions, and inconsistent tech adoption created gaps. For example,

a seller's call for more industry education revealed that not all clients are comfortable with purely digital communication, underscoring the need for a hybrid approach that combines tech efficiency with personal touch.

4.3.3 Ethical and Market Tensions

Growth vs. Sustainability

Some practitioners aimed for rapid expansion and capturing market share, potentially straining systems and ethical oversight, whereas others advocated for cautious, sustainable growth focusing on risk management. This tension indicates that an integrated model must balance entrepreneurial ambition with prudent governance.

4.3.4 Cost–Quality Paradox

There is a paradox between pricing and perceived quality: sellers expecting premium services are willing to pay more, whereas buyers often seek bargains, expecting high service levels at low costs. Integrated firms must navigate this by transparently communicating value and possibly cross-subsidising services to maintain quality without alienating either group.

5 Client-Centric Adaptations:

5.3 Communication Strategies

Effective communication must be tailored — speed and brevity for buyers who value quick updates, versus detailed, assurance-providing communication for sellers who demand accuracy and thoroughness. For example, providing real-time progress updates for buyers and comprehensive breakdowns of costs and steps for sellers can address both groups' needs.

5.4 Inclusive Branding

Embracing diversity and community engagement in branding can enhance trust and appeal. Initiatives like promoting the firm's women-led aspects or community roots align with evolving societal values and can differentiate the firm in a crowded market, turning inclusivity into a competitive advantage.

4.4 Conclusion

Integrated law firms must navigate a complex landscape where efficiency, trust, and ethical compliance intersect. While estate agents and attorneys in the study prioritised operational streamlining, buyers and sellers demanded accountability and transparency. Success for an integrated model hinges on balancing technological adoption with personalised engagement, tailoring pricing structures to reconcile divergent client expectations, and leveraging diversity as a competitive differentiator. Future strategies should address any remaining systemic fragmentation, educate clients to bridge knowledge gaps, and strengthen ethical guardrails to sustain stakeholder trust in an evolving property services market.

Chapter 5: Business Plan

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the research findings within a broader strategic plan for implementing an integrated conveyancing and real estate service model at Mtshabe Attorneys Inc. It evaluates the strategic implications of the qualitative insights, aligning them with business model development objectives from Chapters 1 and 2. In doing so, Chapter 5 provides direction for future implementation and policy considerations, drawing on the interview findings and thematic analyses from Chapter 4.

5.2 Purpose of the Comparative Analysis

As part of the business planning process, a comparative analysis was conducted to benchmark Mtshabe Attorneys Inc.'s proposed integrated service model against established market players.

By reviewing the business models, regulatory compliance practices, client targeting strategies, digital platforms, and unique selling propositions of ten law firms, this research aimed to:

- Identify best practices and avoidable pitfalls.
- Examine the viability and competitiveness of the integrated model.
- Provide empirical support for the proposed dual-service offering.
- Understand the regulatory tensions and digital trends shaping the legal-property interface.

5.3 Key Thematic Insights

5.3.1 Integration Models: In-House vs. Partnership

A primary distinction emerged in how firms operationalise their integration. About half of the benchmarked firms adopted an **in-house model**, combining conveyancing and estate agency services within a single legal entity. Examples include Mtshabe Attorneys, 3%.Com, Louw & Coetsee, Barry & Mouton, and Neumann van Rooyen, where attorneys or in-house agents manage property listings and legal transfers under one roof. The other firms (e.g., STBB, Miltons Matsemela, Dykes van Heerden, and

Symington & De Kok) relied on **strategic partnerships**, collaborating with external estate agents while focusing on legal services.

Implication: For Mtshabe which is pursuing an in-house model—the benefits of tighter coordination and a one-stop-shop client experience must be weighed against the dual compliance burden and resource intensity of operating both legal and estate agency functions at scale.

5.3.2 Regulatory Compliance and Ethical Boundaries

Across all firms, strict compliance with both Legal Practice Council (LPC) rules and Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) regulations was non-negotiable. Firms handling both legal and estate transactions maintained fidelity fund certificates, enforced clear role separation (especially when attorneys acted as agents), and proactively addressed potential ethical conflicts. For instance, some firms outsource certain conveyancing tasks when acting as estate agents, or establish internal "firewalls" between their legal and sales departments to avoid conflicts of interest.

Implication: Mtshabe must rigorously maintain dual licensing and compliance. This includes investing in regular ethics training for staff and instituting clear internal protocols to prevent conflicts of interest (such as separating trust accounts and oversight for each service). Such steps will mitigate reputational and regulatory risks as the firm expands its service offerings.

5.3.3 Digital Adoption and Technology Integration

All examined firms have embraced some form of digital tools or client communication platforms. Larger firms like STBB, Miltons Matsemela, and 3%.Com demonstrate advanced use of proprietary client portals, automated SMS/email updates, and CRM systems to enhance client experience. In contrast, smaller firms showed varying levels of digital transformation. Mtshabe Attorneys Inc. plans to launch a digital case-tracking portal in 2025, demonstrating its alignment with evolving industry standards and client expectations for transparency and accessibility.

Implication: To remain competitive, Mtshabe must accelerate its digital transformation. Client portals, online case tracking systems, and secure communication platforms will be essential for transparency, client satisfaction, and operational scalability. Early investment in technology will help Mtshabe meet modern clients' expectations for real-time information and efficient service.

5.3.4 Market Segmentation and Niche Targeting

Firms tended to position themselves either toward mass urban markets or niche, underserved segments. For example, STBB, Miltons, and 3%.Com target broad, high-volume urban clientele, while firms like Mtshabe, Barry & Mouton, and Neumann van Rooyen focus on niche markets (such as peri-urban communities, deceased estate handling, or first-time homebuyers). Mtshabe's proposed strategy of serving peri-urban areas, handling deceased estates, and assisting first-time buyers mirrors successful niche positioning used by peer firms of similar sise.

Implication: Mtshabe's focus on emerging peri-urban markets is well-supported by industry precedents. To capitalise on this, the firm should tailor its services and marketing to these communities—offering educational outreach and trust-building initiatives. By addressing specific needs of underserved clients (e.g. mobile offices for remote areas, partnerships with local community organisations), Mtshabe can penetrate these segments effectively.

5.3.5 Competitive Differentiation and Brand Positioning

The firms reviewed employ a variety of unique selling propositions (USPs) to stand out. For instance, 3%.Com markets cost savings via a capped commission model; Louw & Coetsee emphasise integrated services in property development sales; STBB and Miltons leverage their scale and speed of service as brand strengths. Mtshabe's proposed USP is **"One Firm, Dual Expertise,"** highlighting the integration of legal and real estate expertise in one practice.

Implication: Mtshabe must consistently reinforce its USP through targeted brand messaging and exemplary service delivery. This could involve showcasing success stories that illustrate the benefits of dual expertise, leveraging client testimonials (social proof), and maintaining high responsiveness. Additionally, differentiating on price (such as tiered fee structures for different service bundles), and emphasising social impact (e.g., being a women-led, community-rooted firm) could further enhance Mtshabe's market position.

5.4 Alignment with Entrepreneurial Theories

The findings from the comparative analysis align closely with several theoretical frameworks introduced in Chapter 2.

- **Resource-Based View (RBV):** Mtshabe's dual registration (as both law practitioners and estate agents), its legal expertise, and its localised community networks constitute strategic assets. These resources can yield sustainable competitive advantage, especially when combined with advanced technology adoption and a client-centric service approach.
- **Effectuation Theory:** Mtshabe's pivot toward peri-urban markets and its minimum viable product (MVP)-driven approach to developing a digital platform demonstrate effectual logic. The firm is making iterative, stakeholder-informed decisions—adapting its strategy based on available means, partnerships, and emerging opportunities rather than a fixed long-term plan.
- **Service Quality Model (SERVQUAL):** Key service quality dimensions—**reliability**, **responsiveness**, and **assurance**—are echoed in the practices of successful firms (e.g., timely updates, dependable outcomes, and knowledgeable guidance). Mtshabe's challenge will be to consistently deliver on these dimensions to build a strong reputation.
- **Institutional Theory:** Regulatory norms enforced by the LPC and PPRA are clearly shaping business models across the industry. Long-term sustainability for Mtshabe will depend on internalising these institutional requirements as part of its strategy (e.g., treating compliance and ethical practice not just as obligations, but as core values that drive decision-making and operations).

5.5 Lessons for Mtshabe Attorneys Inc.

5.5.1 Strengths to Leverage

- **Dual Licensing Advantage**

  Being both an attorney firm and a registered estate agency positions Mtshabe uniquely as a one-stop shop for conveyancing and property sales services.

- **Niche Market Focus**

  Targeting peri-urban and other underserved client segments fills a market gap and differentiates the firm from competitors concentrated in saturated urban markets.

- **Digital Readiness**

  Plans for adopting digital tools (like the case tracking portal) are in line with trends observed in leading firms, which will help Mtshabe improve efficiency and client communication.

5.5.2 Challenges to Mitigate

- **Resource Constraints**

  Limited financial and human resources may hinder the full-scale rollout of both advanced digital infrastructure and expanded estate agency operations, especially for a growing firm.

- **Regulatory Compliance**

  Operating under dual regulators (LPC and PPRA) means Mtshabe must diligently manage compliance to avoid any role conflicts or breaches of professional conduct rules.

- **Market Awareness**

  Building awareness and trust in the firm’s new integrated services among target communities will require intensive outreach and marketing efforts, as many potential clients may be unfamiliar with the dual-service model.

5.5.3 Opportunities to Capitalise On

- **Strategic Partnerships**

  Form alliances with property developers, mortgage originators, and other stakeholders to create referral pipelines and integrated service offerings (e.g., a developer recommending Mtshabe to handle both the legal and sales aspects of new housing projects).

- **Ancillary Services Expansion**

  Introduce related services such as bond registration assistance, will drafting, or notarial services. These can provide additional revenue streams and add value for clients seeking comprehensive property transaction solutions.

- **Educational Content Marketing:** Use webinars, community seminars, and online content to educate potential clients about property transactions. This not only positions Mtshabe as an expert and builds trust, but also serves to attract and convert clients who find the information helpful.

5.5.4 Threats to Anticipate

- **Legal-Tech Disruption**

  Emerging legal-tech startups or platforms might automate parts of the conveyancing process or connect buyers and sellers directly, potentially eroding segments of the value chain that law firms traditionally handle.

- **Industry Skepticism**

  Traditional estate agents or legal professionals may be skeptical of the integrated model, possibly resisting collaboration or discouraging referrals (viewing Mtshabe as a competitor in their domain).

- **Economic Volatility**

  Economic downturns or property market slumps could reduce transaction volumes, particularly in the more volatile peri-urban areas, impacting the firm’s business projections.

5.6 Financial Projections and Viability

A five-year financial projection has been prepared to assess the venture's viability. The projections (summarised from internal financial models) indicate that Mtshabe Attorneys Inc. is expected to incur modest losses in the first two years as it establishes operations and builds a client base, but will reach a break-even point by approximately the end of Year 2. By Year 3 (the 2027 financial year), the firm is projected to turn a small net profit, and by Year 5 it is forecasted to be solidly profitable. Specifically, under conservative assumptions, revenue is expected to grow from about R800,000 in Year 1 to roughly R2,500,000 by Year 5, driven by increasing transaction volumes and expanded service offerings. Concurrently, the net profit margin is projected to improve from a negative position to approximately 15–20% by Year 5. For example, the Year 5 forecast shows a net profit on the order of R450,000–R500,000, which demonstrates a healthy return once the business reaches maturity.

These projections suggest that the venture is financially viable over the medium term, provided that growth assumptions are met. The initial startup financing requirement (approximately R1.5 million, partially as a business loan) covers office setup, technology investment, and operating expenses in the early phase. According to the forecast, the firm will utilise this capital to fund initial losses and then progressively pay down debt from Year 3 onward as cash flows turn positive. By Year 5, the firm would not only be able to service its loan comfortably but also potentially reinvest profits into further growth (such as hiring additional staff or marketing in new areas). A sensitivity analysis indicates that even if revenues were 10% lower than projected, the break-even point would shift only by a few months, and the firm would still be profitable by Year 5 – though at a lower margin. This provides some cushion for the inherent uncertainties in revenue forecasting.

In summary, the financial outlook is cautiously optimistic. While the integrated model requires upfront investment and will face a ramp-up period, the long-term returns appear promising. By Year 5, the cumulative benefits of integration (efficient operations and multiple revenue streams from legal fees and commissions) are expected to yield a robust financial performance. Continued financial monitoring and prudent cost management will be essential, but based on the projections, Mtshabe

Attorneys Inc. can achieve sustainable profitability and justify the viability of the integrated venture.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, integrated legal-property service firms have proven to be both viable and increasingly prominent in the South African market. Market trends indicate that successful integration hinges on a few critical factors: digital readiness, a focused niche strategy, strict adherence to regulatory requirements, and the ability to clearly communicate value to clients. For Mtshabe Attorneys Inc., these insights provide a strategic roadmap to scale operations sustainably, build a distinctive brand presence, and serve communities that remain underserved by traditional, fragmented legal and real estate service models. Moving forward, implementation efforts should focus on strengthening the firm’s core competencies, investing in digital infrastructure, and cultivating trust through ethical conduct and a client-centric service experience.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

In light of the research findings, this section addresses the four research questions posed at the outset of the study. The answers synthesise how each question was resolved by the study's results and analysis.

6.1.1 Research Question 1 *What are the primary benefits and challenges of integrating conveyancing and real estate services within a law firm?*

Answer: The study found clear evidence of **operational benefits** to integration, including faster transaction completion, reduced duplicative work, and a more seamless client experience. These benefits were exemplified by participants' testimonies of streamlined communication and centralised workflows that eliminated delays. For instance, both estate agents and attorneys noted that having "one team" manage the process improves efficiency and client convenience. This confirms the anticipated benefit that an integrated model can enhance service speed and cost-effectiveness for clients. However, the study equally uncovered significant **challenges** inherent to this integration. Chief among them are ethical and professional dilemmas – notably, conflicts of interest and blurred lines of accountability. Legal practitioners expressed concern about maintaining impartial legal advice when also fulfilling the role of estate agent, highlighting risks such as potential *touting* for business and difficulties in remaining objective. There were also operational challenges like coordinating across disciplines and ensuring staff are adequately trained in both domains. In sum, RQ1 has been answered by identifying the *trade-off* at the heart of the integrated model: it confers efficiency and client service advantages, but it also brings compliance and ethical complexities that must be carefully managed.

6.1.2 Research Question 2: How does the current regulatory framework, including the Property Practitioners Act and Legal Practice Act, influence the feasibility of an integrated service model?

Answer: The research indicates that the current regulatory framework both enables and constrains the feasibility of an integrated conveyancing-real estate firm. On one hand, laws like the Property Practitioners Act 22 of 2019 provide a legal basis for attorneys to perform estate agency functions (under specific conditions), thereby enabling the very possibility of an integrated model. This Act, along with the Legal Practice Act, outlines the licensing and conduct requirements for each profession, which integrated firms must satisfy. The study's findings show that many stakeholders view the existence of these Acts as acknowledging market evolution – in principle, the regulatory framework does *not* outright prohibit integration, which is a positive sign for feasibility.

However, the influence of the regulatory framework is double**-edged**: participants reported that ambiguity and gaps in enforcement significantly affect day-to-day feasibility. For example, the PPA's lack of detailed guidance on managing dual roles leaves firms to navigate grey areas on their own (such as handling a property sale and its transfer without breaching conflict-of-interest rules). Moreover, separate oversight by the PPRA and Legal Practice Council can lead to overlapping or even conflicting obligations, which small firms find burdensome to reconcile. The study thus answers RQ2 by demonstrating that while an integrated model is legally feasible under current South African law, the practical viability is hampered by regulatory **uncertainties and compliance burdens**. Successful operation of such a model presently relies on the firm's proactive adaptation – implementing internal policies that satisfy both sets of regulations – which not all firms may have capacity to do. In essence, the regulatory framework's influence is crucial: it *permits* integrated practice but does not yet *fully support* it, meaning further regulatory clarity and integration of oversight would improve the model's feasibility.

6.1.3 Research Question 3: What are the perceptions of key stakeholders regarding bundled conveyancing and real estate services?

Answer: The study gathered perspectives from three groups of stakeholders – estate agents, conveyancing attorneys, and property buyers/sellers – and found a spectrum of perceptions, generally tilting positive but with important concerns noted. **Estate agents** interviewed largely perceived the bundled service model as a way to enhance efficiency and client satisfaction, citing benefits like "seamless procedures" and better negotiation coordination.

They appreciated the improved communication with attorneys in an integrated firm, though one agent cautioned against merging roles too much, advising that certain functions remain separate to avoid conflicts. Conveyancing attorneys in the study acknowledged the business growth opportunities and client service improvements that integration can bring. They observed that integrated firms can attract clients by offering convenience and a comprehensive service. Yet, attorneys were also the most sensitive to the ethical and professional risks – their perception was that without careful ethical safeguards, the integrated model could endanger their professional reputation.

They emphasised maintaining separate trust accounts and clear role demarcation to uphold integrity. **Clients (buyers and sellers)** had generally favorable views toward the idea of one-stop property services. Many buyers and sellers in the study associated the integrated approach with less stress and more trust, because they "know who is accountable" and receive updates proactively. Notably, even participants who had not directly used an integrated firm conceptually liked the idea of a coordinated service handling all aspects of the transaction. On the other hand, some clients were concerned about cost: a few buyers felt that if one firm does everything, it should possibly cost less than hiring separate entities, whereas some sellers were willing to pay a premium but expected top-tier service in return. These nuanced perceptions show that stakeholders see *value* in the integrated model – particularly in terms of convenience, transparency, and trust. At the same time, each group has specific concerns (ethical integrity for attorneys, role clarity for agents, and cost–value balance for clients). Therefore, RQ3 is answered by revealing that stakeholder perceptions are **cautiously optimistic**: they recognise the integrated model's potential to improve the property transaction experience, yet they also identify critical areas (ethics, role boundaries, pricing) that determine whether they fully embrace it.

6.1.4 Research Question 4: What critical components are necessary for a sustainable and compliant business model for an integrated law firm?

Answer: Drawing from the collective insights of the study, a sustainable and compliant business model for an integrated conveyancing and real estate law firm must include several key components. First, robust ethical governance mechanisms are essential – this means concrete policies such as maintaining separate trust accounts for different services, instituting Chinese walls or referral practices for conflicted transactions, and ensuring all professionals adhere to both legal and real estate codes of conduct.

These measures safeguard the firm's compliance and reputation, addressing the challenges identified in RQ1 and RQ2. Second, the business model should embed operational efficiency as a core value proposition: a unified case management system, standardised processes, and cross-trained staff will enable the firm to deliver faster turnaround times and a smoother client experience than traditional separate services. The findings show that efficiency drives client satisfaction, so it must be a pillar of the model.

Third, client-centric service design is critical – the model should incorporate proactive communication strategies, transparency (e.g. client portals for tracking progress), and adaptable service offerings. This component speaks to building trust and satisfaction (RQ3's insights) and might involve tiered service packages or flexible pricing to cater to different client needs while clearly communicating the value delivered at each level.

Fourth, strategic technology adoption underpins both efficiency and client-centricity in the modern context. A sustainable integrated firm will invest in suitable technologies (such as conveyancing software, digital signature platforms, and CRM systems) to streamline operations and keep clients informed in real time. The model must also plan for training staff in these technologies and maintaining a personal touch with clients, achieving a balance in tech use. Fifth, the business model should include a compliance and regulatory monitoring plan – essentially, an internal framework to stay updated with regulatory changes and ensure ongoing adherence. Given that laws and regulations can evolve, allocating responsibilities for compliance (perhaps even a compliance officer role) is a component that ensures the firm remains in good standing and can adapt quickly to any regulatory shifts (addressing RQ2's dynamic). Finally, a long-term sustainable model will emphasise talent and culture – fostering a culture of integrity, continuous improvement, and interdisciplinary collaboration among attorneys and estate agents. This human element is important for longevity: employees should be encouraged to uphold ethical standards, improve service quality, and innovate. The study's synthesis (see Efficiency–Trust Interdependence and Ethical and Market Tensions in the discussion) underlines that success comes from balancing growth with governance; hence a sustainable model deliberately manages that balance through its structure and culture. In conclusion, RQ4 is answered by outlining that an integrated firm's business model must holistically integrate compliance measures, operational systems, client-focused practices, technology, and culture. Only by having all these components in place can such a firm achieve both sustainability (financially and operationally) and compliance (legally and ethically) in the long run.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the above discussion, several actionable recommendations are proposed for different stakeholders in the integrated conveyancing and real estate services ecosystem. These recommendations aim to help practitioners implement successful business models, guide regulators in refining policies, and empower clients in engaging with integrated services.

6.2.1 For Legal Practitioners (Integrated Firm Owners and Managers)

- **Establish Strong Ethical Protocols**

  Integrated law firm practitioners should formalise internal protocols to manage conflicts of interest. This includes maintaining separate trust accounts for conveyancing transactions and estate agency funds, clear guidelines on when to recuse or refer out a transaction (e.g. if the firm facilitated the sale, another firm should handle the transfer to avoid self-dealing), and regular ethics training for staff on both legal and real estate professional standards. By instilling a culture of ethical vigilance and "checks and balances" (such as dual approval for any transaction that might pose a conflict), firms can govern the efficiency–ethics tension identified in the study.

- **Invest in Technology and Training**

  To capitalise on the efficiency gains of integration, law firms should invest in proven proptech and legaltech solutions – for example, case management software, client communication portals, and document automation tools. However, technology alone is not a panacea; practitioners must also invest in training their teams to use these tools effectively and in developing client communication protocols that integrate digital updates with personal service. A dedicated budget for technology upgrades and an IT support plan will help smaller firms overcome the initial cost barrier. Embracing technology will not only streamline operations but also differentiate the firm in a competitive market through superior client transparency (as highlighted by the positive client responses to real-time updates in the findings).

- **Implement Client-Centric Service Models**

  Legal practitioners should design their service offerings around client needs and preferences identified in the research. This could involve creating **tiered service packages** – for instance, a basic package for budget-conscious buyers (emphasising essential conveyancing with minimal frills at a lower fee) and a premium package for sellers or upscale clients (including value-adds like detailed legal opinions, extended consultation time, or even home sale advisory services, at a higher fee). By aligning pricing with service levels, firms can cater to diverse market segments without compromising profitability. Moreover, firms should establish robust communication practices: assign a single point-of-contact for each client, provide regular status updates (weekly emails or an online dashboard), and be responsive to queries. Such client-centric measures build trust and satisfaction, thereby driving referrals and repeat business for the integrated firm.

- **Balance Growth with Quality Control**

  As the integrated business expands, practitioners should be cautious not to outpace their capacity to deliver quality. A recommendation is to institute **quality assurance checkpoints** – for example, conducting post-transaction client feedback surveys and internal file audits – to ensure service standards remain high as volume grows. If the firm plans to add more estate agents or open new branches, it should concurrently bolster its compliance and supervisory structures. This might mean hiring or appointing a compliance officer or senior practitioner to oversee that all transactions adhere to both legal and estate agency requirements. Sustainable growth should be prioritised over rapid expansion, echoing the finding that some professionals advocate cautious scaling to maintain ethical guardrails. By monitoring client outcomes and compliance continually, practitioners can adjust their business model proactively and avoid the “growth at all costs” pitfall.

- **Foster an Integrated Professional Culture**

  Finally, law firm leaders should work to break down silos between the legal and real estate sides of the business. Regular joint training sessions, team-building activities, and cross-functional meetings can help align the goals of attorneys and estate agents within the firm. When all team members understand each other’s roles and constraints (for example, agents understanding legal ethical duties, and lawyers appreciating sales processes), the firm can operate more cohesively. An integrated culture will support knowledge-sharing – estate agents can inform legal staff of market trends, while lawyers can brief agents on legal updates – resulting in a more robust service offering. Cultivating a unified team ethos centered on excellent client service and professionalism will reinforce the firm’s brand and reliability in the eyes of clients.

6.2.2 For Policymakers and Regulators

- **Clarify and Harmonise Regulations**

  Policymakers should consider steps to harmonise the regulatory regime governing integrated practices. In practical terms, this could involve joint guidelines issued by the Legal Practice Council (LPC) and the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) specifically addressing law firm-estate agency dual operations. Such guidelines can clarify permissible business structures, outline how trust accounts should be managed in an integrated firm, and specify conflict of interest rules (for example, confirming whether the same firm can handle a sale and transfer, and if not, what referral mechanisms are acceptable). By providing a unified framework, regulators would reduce the ambiguity that current integrated firms face, thereby lowering compliance risks. In the long term, regulators might even explore amending legislation to create an *explicit license category or accreditation* for integrated firms, which would codify requirements in one place. This would operationalise the attorneys' recommendation from the study to have a "unified framework" for compliance.

- **Strengthen Enforcement and Oversight**

  The research highlighted that a lack of enforcement (for instance, of the PPA's provisions) undermines trust in the regulatory environment. Regulators should therefore bolster their oversight capacities. This could involve increasing the frequency of audits or inspections for firms that hold both Fidelity Fund and Fidelity Fund Certificates (for attorneys and estate agents, respectively), to ensure they are complying with both sets of rules. Additionally, establishing a liaison or joint task force between the PPRA and LPC could help monitor integrated practices more effectively – for example, sharing information on disciplinary actions or complaints that involve dual practice issues. By actively enforcing existing rules (such as acting against unregistered practitioners or improper handling of client funds), regulators will create a level playing field and discourage unethical actors, ultimately protecting consumers.

- **Provide Training and Support Programs**

  To facilitate lawful and effective adoption of te integrated model, regulatory bodies and industry associations (like law societies or the Estate Agency Affairs practitioners' councils) could offer training and resources. Workshops or certification courses could be developed for attorneys who wish to incorporate an estate agency, covering topics such as the practical application of the Property Practitioners Act, understanding estate agents' code of conduct, and best practices for running a dual practice. Conversely, estate agents who join law firms might benefit from workshops on legal ethics and conveyancing basics. Regulators can partner with academic institutions or professional bodies to provide these programs. Furthermore, publishing *guidance notes or case studies* of compliant integrated firms (anonymised if necessary) on official platforms could serve as templates for new entrants. Such support not only guides practitioners but also signals that regulators are forward-looking and supportive of innovation, as long as it occurs within a compliant framework.

- **Encourage Technological Innovation and Access**

  Regulators and policymakers should also recognise the role of technology in improving compliance and service delivery. They can encourage innovation by, for example, fast-tracking approval of electronic conveyancing initiatives and ensuring the legal validity of digital signatures and documents in property transactions (areas that fall within policy influence). The South African government's implementation of the Electronic Deeds Registration System is one such step that, if accelerated, would benefit integrated firms and conventional firms alike by reducing delays at the Deeds Office. Additionally, policymakers might consider incentives for small firms to adopt technology – this could be in the form of tax deductions for investing in approved legal technology or grants/subsidies channelled through professional associations for digital transformation projects. By narrowing the tech gap, regulators can help ensure that even smaller integrated practices can compete and comply using modern tools (for instance, mandated use of secure digital document systems could enhance oversight and reduce fraud). Overall, a regulatory stance that is both strict on ethics and encouraging of innovation will create an environment in which integrated business models can thrive responsibly.

6.2.3 For Clients/Consumers

- **Be Informed and Exercise Due Diligence**

  Clients who are considering using an integrated law firm for their property transaction should educate themselves about the model's benefits and safeguards. As this research has shown, an integrated firm can offer convenience and potentially faster service. However, consumers should verify that the firm is properly registered both as a law practice and an estate agency. It is recommended that clients check the firm's credentials – for example, confirming the attorneys are in good standing with the Legal Practice Council and that the firm (or its estate agents) holds a valid Fidelity Fund certificate under the Property Practitioners Act. Reputable firms will usually disclose these registrations on their websites or upon request. By doing this due diligence, clients protect themselves from unlicensed operators and ensure they engage a firm that is accountable to regulatory bodies.

- **Communicate Expectations Clearly**

  To get the most out of an integrated service, clients should be proactive in communicating their needs and expectations to the firm. At the outset of the engagement, a client (whether buyer or seller) might discuss what level of service they desire – for instance, how frequently they want updates, their budget constraints, or any concerns about conflicts of interest. Since the study found differences in expectations (with some clients prioritising cost and others prioritising comprehensive service), clearly voicing priorities helps the firm tailor its approach. Clients should not hesitate to ask for a service plan or a fee breakdown that separates the conveyancing legal fees and the estate agent commission, for transparency. This not only builds trust but also ensures that any potential misunderstandings are addressed early on. A well-informed client who actively communicates can significantly enhance the working relationship and outcome.

- **Leverage the Benefits of Integrated Services**

  Clients can take advantage of the unique benefits offered by integrated firms. For example, because communication is centralised, clients should note that they have a single point of contact for all questions or issues – they can direct any query to the firm's representative (whether it's the attorney or a client liaison) without worrying about running back and forth between a separate lawyer and estate agent. Clients can also make use of any technology tools provided (such as online trackers or client portals) to stay updated on progress; if these tools exist, clients should request access and training on how to use them. Moreover, an integrated firm often has a broader perspective on the transaction. Clients might receive holistic advice – for instance, a seller could get legal tips on how to handle certain disclosures or a buyer could get early guidance on mortgage or title issues – because the team is looking at the deal end-to-end. Clients are encouraged to ask integrated firms for this kind of comprehensive advice, thereby extracting full value from the one-stop-shop model.

- **Provide Feedback and Hold Firms Accountable**

  Finally, consumers play a role in shaping the market by providing feedback. If you use an integrated firm and have a positive experience (e.g. the process felt smoother than past experiences with separate firms), share that feedback with the firm and even publicly (through reviews or testimonials). Positive reinforcement can help successful models gain more acceptance. Conversely, if issues arise – say there were lapses in communication or you suspect a conflict of interest wasn't handled properly – it is important to raise these concerns. Clients should report serious unethical conduct to the appropriate regulator (either the Legal Practice Council or the PPRA, or both). By voicing concerns or filing complaints when warranted, consumers help regulators identify problem areas and encourage firms to continuously improve. In essence, informed and proactive clients can enjoy better service and also contribute to the overall health and accountability of this emerging integrated services sector.

6.2.4 Future Research Directions

While this study has shed light on the integration of conveyancing and real estate services in a law firm context, it also highlights several areas where further research is needed. Future scholarly and practical inquiries can build on these findings to deepen understanding and guide the evolution of integrated legal-service models in South Africa. The following are three key directions for future research:

- **Longitudinal Impact Studies on Integrated vs. Traditional Models**

  Future research could track the long-term outcomes of integrated law firm models compared to the traditional separated model. This would involve quantitative measures of efficiency (e.g. average time to transfer property, number of transactions handled per period), client satisfaction ratings over time, and firm performance metrics (profitability, client retention rates). A longitudinal study or panel data analysis could determine whether the initial efficiency gains observed are sustained in the long run and whether client trust in integrated firms grows or diminishes with increased market presence. Such research would provide empirical validation (or refutation) of the presumed benefits of integration and might reveal any unintended consequences that only become apparent over time (for instance, does prolonged operation of dual services lead to regulatory sanctions or reputational issues?). This line of inquiry addresses a practical gap in evidence and would be valuable for both practitioners considering integration and policymakers evaluating its impact on the legal services market.

- **Regulatory and Policy Analysis in Comparative Perspective**

  Another promising research avenue is a comparative analysis of regulatory approaches to multidisciplinary practices in law across different jurisdictions. South Africa's experience with the Property Practitioners Act and Legal Practice Act could be compared with other countries that have allowed (or disallowed) similar integrations – for example, jurisdictions in the EU, UK (where alternative business structures in legal services have been introduced), or jurisdictions that strictly separate law and real estate. Such a study would examine how different regulatory frameworks influence the prevalence and success of integrated firms. It would also explore best practices in regulatory adaptation: how have regulators elsewhere mitigated conflicts of interest in multidisciplinary firms? What enforcement strategies work best? By situating the South African context in a global framework, scholars can identify which regulatory innovations might be transplanted or adapted to improve the local model. This research direction not only has scholarly merit in the field of comparative law and regulatory studies, but it also offers practical lessons for policymakers aiming to refine South Africa’s approach.

- **Technology Adoption and Client Outcome Research**

  Given the crucial role of technology identified in this study, future research could focus specifically on legal tech and proptech in integrated firms. One aspect is to study the adoption rate, barriers, and catalysts of technology use among integrated law firms versus traditional firms. Surveys or case studies could be conducted to find out which digital tools have the most impact on efficiency and client satisfaction (e.g. does implementing an online client portal significantly raise client satisfaction scores? Does e-conveyancing reduce errors and costs?). Another aspect is to explore client outcomes in transactions facilitated by high-tech integrated firms compared to low-tech ones. This would merge technology acceptance research with legal service delivery outcomes. Moreover, as electronic deeds registration and other digital infrastructures come online in South Africa, researchers could evaluate how integrated firms leverage these and whether that leads to measurable differences in turnaround times or error rates. This research direction fills a scholarly gap at the intersection of technology management and legal studies, and it offers practical insights for law firm leaders on where to focus their technology investments.

- **Consumer Behaviour and Trust in Integrated Services:** Finally, further research can delve into the consumer perspective in more detail, particularly focusing on trust-building and decision factors. A behavioural study could investigate how clients decide to choose an integrated firm over separate services: what informational cues or referrals drive that decision, and how do they evaluate trustworthiness? Experiments or surveys might test, for example, whether consumers perceive a higher risk in using an integrated firm (due to potential conflict of interest) or a lower risk (due to convenience and reputed oversight), and what marketing or assurance strategies can influence this perception. Additionally, research could examine the efficacy of different trust signals – such as dual accreditation badges, client testimonials, or transparency tools – in assuaging client concerns. Understanding these factors in depth would be a scholarly contribution to services marketing and consumer protection literature. Practically, it would guide integrated firms in designing their client outreach and education efforts, and help regulators or professional associations in crafting public awareness messages about the integrated model.

Each of these research directions addresses gaps identified either in this study or in the broader discourse on integrated legal services. Pursuing them will not only enrich academic knowledge on multidisciplinary professional practices but also support the evolution of integrated conveyancing and real estate services in South Africa by providing evidence-based guidance to stakeholders.

APPENDIX 1 - : BUSINESS MODELS & DIGITAL INTEGRATION

Integrated Conveyancing and Real Estate Law Firms in South Africa: Business Models & Digital Integration

Executive Summary

Integrated conveyancing and real estate law firms combine legal services with property brokerage under one roof, offering clients a "one-stop shop" for property transactions. This report analyses ten South African firms exemplifying this model, examining their business structures, integration strategies (in-house estate agency vs partnerships), use of technology, regulatory compliance, market focus, and unique selling points. Key findings include:

- Service Offerings & Integration: All firms studied provide traditional legal conveyancing alongside real estate services like property sales or valuations, but their integration models vary. Some have in-house estate agency divisions (e.g. Mtshabe Attorneys Inc., Louw & Coetsee) while others partner closely with external estate agencies (e.g. STBB, Dykes van Heerden)threepercent.com ch.linkedin.com. In-house models emphasise seamless service ("legal advisor and property partner under one roof"), whereas partnership models leverage networks of independent agents.

- Regulatory Compliance: Each firm is dual-regulated, adhering to the Legal Practice Council (LPC) rules for attorneys and registering with the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) for estate agency work. Compliance with the Property Practitioners Act (22 of 2019) is critical; notably, law firms acting as estate agents must navigate rules that *prevent them from handling the transfer conveyancing of properties they have sold* propertyprofessional.co.sa, often resolved by involving external attorneys to avoid conflicts.

- **Digital Platform**

  Most firms have adopted digital tools to enhance client service and efficiency. Common platforms include case-tracking portals, client communication systems, and CRM software. For example, STBB (Smith Tabata Buchanan

Boyes) offers "real time" online tracking of transfers via its STBB Direct mobile app, with instant SMS/email updates to clientshelderberg.bis. Several firms use LexisConvey or similar systems (sometimes branded as Lexis Tracker or GhostConvey) to streamline document assembly and give clients transparency into the conveyancing process. Boutique firms like Mtshabe plan to launch client portals with real-time case tracking to stay competitive. Digital engagement through social media and websites is also a focus area across firms.

- Market Focus: Each firm targets specific niches. Larger firms (STBB, Miltons Matsemela) serve urban and nationwide markets including developers, banks, and repeat buyershelderberg.bis. Mid-sised firms often focus on particular regions or client types – e.g. Louw & Coetsee and Miltons Matsemela are strong in the Western Cape residential marketproperty24.comfacebook.com, while Dykes van Heerden (DVH) specialises in developer transfers and trains estate agents across Cape Town and Gautengch.linkedin.com. Boutique integrated firms like Mtshabe sero in on *first-time buyers, peri-urban areas, and deceased estate sales*, leveraging community trust in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and East London. Such niche targeting allows smaller firms to compete with high-touch service and local expertise.

- Unique Selling Propositions: The integrated model itself is a key differentiator. Firms emphasise the convenience and efficiency of having legal and estate services in tandem. For instance, Mtshabe's slogan is *"One Firm, Dual Expertise"* highlighting combined services, and 3%.Com Properties touts its attorney-agents who provide "full range of services… from listing the property to transferring it" at a discounted 3% commissionthreepercent.com. Larger players differentiate via scale and tech – STBB brands itself as *"the big small firm"* blending national reach with personal service, and prides itself on fast transfers aided by digital trackinghelderberg.bis. Firms also stress trust and compliance (all transactions handled by admitted attorneys), and cost-effectiveness (e.g. commission savings or bundled fees).

Overall, South Africa's integrated conveyancing firms are innovating the traditional property transfer process. They are blending multidisciplinary services, investing in proptech and client portals, and navigating a complex regulatory landscape to offer value-added, streamlined property transactions. The following sections provide a detailed comparative analysis of ten such firms, followed by tables summarising their attributes and performance.

Introduction

Property transactions in South Africa typically involve multiple parties – estate agents to market and sell the property, and attorneys (conveyancers) to handle the legal transfer. Integrated conveyancing and real estate law firms aim to consolidate these roles, offering clients a single entity to manage the entire sale and transfer process. This integration can improve communication, reduce delays, and potentially lower costs for clients. However, it also requires firms to comply with dual regulations and to possess expertise across both legal and marketing domains propertyprofessional.co.sa.

This report examines ten South African law firms that exemplify the integrated model of "legal + real estate" services. The firms vary in sise, geographic focus, and approach to integration – from large national firms with partnerships to boutique firms with in-house estate agencies. The analysis is organised thematically to compare their service offerings, business models, use of technology, regulatory compliance, market focus, and unique selling points. Comparative tables and charts are included to highlight key data across the firms.

By studying these firms, we gain insight into how the legal and real estate professions are converging in South Africa, what benefits and challenges arise from integration, and how digital platforms are enabling a more client-centric experience in property transactions. The findings may inform best practices for firms considering an integrated strategy and illustrate how such firms position themselves in a competitive property market.

Service Offerings and Target Markets

All ten firms offer conveyancing (property transfer legal services) as a core service, combined with some form of estate agency or property brokerage service. Table 1 below provides an overview of each firm's primary services, integration model, and target market segment.

- **Mtshabe Attorneys Inc**. – A boutique firm (founded 2019, formally dual-registered in 2023) that *“uniquely combines legal expertise (conveyancing, litigation, estate planning) with real estate services (property sales, valuations, management)”*. Mtshabe offers estate agency services in-house, focusing on first-time buyers and peri-urban clients. Its target market includes individuals and families in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and East London, particularly those seeking one-stop guidance for buying their first home or handling deceased estates. This niche focus on emerging market segments (e.g. new township developments, estate administration sales) is a key part of its strategy.
- **Smith Tabata Buchanan Boyes (STBB)** – One of South Africa’s largest property law firms, with 11 branches nationwide and 90+ attorneys helderberg.bis. STBB is a full-service law firm, but property law and conveyancing are flagship services. While STBB does not operate its own estate agency, it works in partnership with many independent estate agencies – it is often the preferred conveyancer for agencies due to its reputation and tech capabilitieshelderberg.bis. STBB serves a broad market: individual home buyers/sellers (retail conveyancing) as well as property developers and corporate clients (commercial real estate deals). Its widespread branch network enables coverage of major urban markets (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, etc.), and it emphasises personalised service despite its sise. The firm’s service offerings also extend to related areas like bond registrations, sectional title developments, and notarial work, making it a one-stop legal shop for real estate professionals and clientshelderberg.bis.
- Louw & Coetsee Attorneys and Properties – A medium-sised Cape Town firm (Durbanville-based) that has explicitly integrated with an affiliated estate agency. Louw & Coetsee Attorneys specialises in conveyancing, property law and new property developments, boasting a team of five conveyancers property24.com. In tandem, it operates Louw & Coetsee Properties, an in-house real estate agency division. The two entities are closely linked – the property agency is *“backed by the expertise of Louw & Coetsee Attorneys”* lcproperties.co.sa, ensuring legal oversight on transactions. This integration allows the firm to handle developer sales (marketing new development units and doing the conveyancing) and private resales alike. Louw & Coetsee’s target

market is largely the Northern Suburbs of Cape Town (Durbanville, Stellenbosch, etc.), including residential property buyers/sellers and property developers in that region. Their dual model attracts clients who want a seamless sale-to-transfer process in local markets, and the firm is known for efficient transfers and personal service (reflected in client testimonials) louwcoet.co.sa.

- **3%.Com Properties** – Not a single firm but a franchise network of law firms across South Africa operating under the 3%.Com brand. It was founded by attorneys to "disrupt" the real estate industrythreepercent.com with a low commission model. Each franchisee is a law firm where the attorneys are also registered estate agents. 3%.Com member firms perform *"the full range of services involved in a property transaction… evaluating, listing, marketing and selling the property… negotiating the sale… arranging finance, transferring the property, [and] paying the seller"*threepercent.com. In other words, the attorney handles everything from mandate to closing, enabled by their dual qualifications. The distinguishing feature, as the name suggests, is a 3% (+ VAT) fixed commission (significantly lower than traditional agent fees), leveraging the fact that attorneys can charge less commission yet still earn through legal feesthreepercent.com. 3%.Com has branches in 8 of 9 provinces threepercent.com, making its coverage national; typical clients are cost-conscious sellers and buyers who prefer an attorney-driven process. Target markets include residential sellers looking to save on commission and expatriate or investor clients who value the legal rigor (the network markets itself to South Africans abroad investing at homeinstagram.com). Each franchise focuses on its local area but benefits from a centralised online property platform and branding. In sum, 3%.Com's service offering is end-to-end property sales by attorneys, appealing to a market segment that trusts legal professionals to also handle sales.

- **Miltons Matsemela Inc.** – A prominent conveyancing firm branded as "The Conveyancers", with origins in the Western Cape and offices also in Gauteng. Miltons offers the *"full spectrum of legal services including: conveyancing and estate agency law"*facebook.com. While they do not run an estate agency of their own, they provide estate agency law expertise and support – for example, advising estate agents on legal compliance and handling property transfers for numerous agencies. Miltons Matsemela's target market is broad: they cater to urban home buyers and sellers, estate agencies, and banks (they are often on bank panels for bond registrations). They have built a strong brand in the Cape Town property market and are known for high volume transfers (leveraging efficient systems). Through ongoing seminars and newsletters, Miltons also engages directly with real estate agents and the public, positioning itself as a thought leader in property law. Their community outreach and longevity (25+ years) add to their appeal as a trusted firmfacebook.com. In summary, Miltons' service offering centers on conveyancing at scale, and its market focus includes both individual clients and industry players that require dependable transfer attorneys.

- **Dykes van Heerden (DVH) Group** – A specialised property law firm with offices in Cape Town and Johannesburg (Bo Oakdale and Illovo), DVH focuses exclusively on conveyancing and property law servicesch.linkedin.com. The firm does not list properties itself, but it follows a partnership integration model by working very closely with real estate agents and property developers. In fact, DVH differentiates itself by educating and supporting estate agents: *"property lawyer Louis Slabbert… loves educating real estate agents on the complexities of property law… runs training and roadshows… teaching agents how to stand out"*ch.linkedin.com. By offering legal training, DVH effectively integrates into the operations of estate agencies as a preferred partner. Services include residential and commercial transfers, bond registrations, developments (opening sectional title schemes, etc.), and legal advisory on property deals. Their target market comprises estate agencies and property developers seeking a legal partner who adds value beyond basic conveyancing. Geographically, DVH serves the Cape Town and Gauteng markets and has become known for fast turnaround times and innovative solutions (they even launched a DVH Law app for clients/agents to track transactions, demonstrating tech-forward service). This approach attracts high-volume business from agents and developers, while also serving individual buyers and sellers who are referred to them.

- **Barry en Mouton Attorneys** – A small firm based in the Western Cape (with presence in towns like Calitsdorp and Mossel Bay), Barry & Mouton is an example of an integrated rural practice. It is described as a "law firm and real estate agency" offering legal services and help for clients *"looking to buy or sell properties in the area"*wanderlog.com. Their services include general law practice and estate agency under one roof, likely catering to a close-knit community. The integration allows clients in their region to rely on one trusted local firm for everything from drafting the sale agreement to registering the transfer. The target market is local buyers and sellers in the Garden Route/Karoo region, including farms, smallholdings, and town properties. Unique challenges in such markets (e.g., clients unfamiliar with legal processes, or needing estate planning along with property sale) are met by the firm's dual expertise in estate management and legal advicewanderlog.com. Barry en Mouton's competitive edge is its deep local knowledge and reputation (it is noted as "well-known" in its areawanderlog.com), giving it an authoritative position in a smaller market where trust is paramount.
- **Symington & De Kok Attorneys** – An established law firm founded in 1957 with offices in Bloemfontein (Free State) and Bellville (Western Cape) lusha.com. Symington & De Kok (often styled "Symok") provides a wide range of legal services (corporate law, litigation, estates, etc.) with a strong Conveyancing and Property Law department. While not branded as an estate agency, Symington & De Kok has integrated in other ways over its long history – for example, by facilitating property sales through auctions and tenders and by leveraging their extensive commercial client base to generate conveyancing work. They render services across *"Corporate and Commercial Law, Estates and Trusts, Family Law… [and] property and conveyancing"*property24.com, making them a one-stop firm for many clients. Their conveyancing unit handles transfers referred by realtors and those arising from deceased estates or insolvent estates (which they administer legally). The target market includes Free State property owners, agricultural land transactions, and regional developers, as well as national clients via their Cape Town presence. Symington & De Kok's longevity and multi-disciplinary practice are key selling points – clients engage them for legal matters and benefit from in-house

conveyancers when property issues come up. They maintain compliance with both LPC and PPRA as needed (for instance, attorneys in the firm act as executors or liquidators who sell property, thus falling under the property practitioner definition). In essence, Symington & De Kok integrates services by providing legal and property transaction support within a full-service firm, targeting traditional markets that value an established name.

- **Neumann van Rooyen Inc.** – A law firm headquartered in Welkom (Free State) that illustrates integration in a smaller-city context. Neumann van Rooyen (NvR) is a long-standing firm in the Goldfields region, known for both its legal services and involvement in property sales through affiliated channels. The firm's offerings cover conveyancing, estate law, and auctioneering of properties. In the past, NvR hosted annual property auctions and had a property brokerage arm to assist with selling residential and commercial properties in the Free State. This implies an integration model where the firm's attorneys might act as estate agents particularly for special situations (auctions, distressed sales, deceased estate properties). Their target market is Free State property buyers and sellers, including the mining town communities around Welkom, where they are a trusted brand. By combining legal and auction services, Neumann van Rooyen provides clients in a regional market with convenient access to buyers and legal transfer in one package. Their unique selling point is this all-in-one service in a market that may have limited separate estate agency infrastructure. The firm, like others, is fully compliant – their attorneys and auctioneers are registered as property practitioners, and they adhere to the required fidelity fund certificates to operate both arms legally.

(Table 1 below summarises the above details for each firm.)

Table 1: Service Offerings, Integration Model, and Target Market of Selected Firms

Firm (Location)	Services Offered	Integration Model	Primary Target Market
Mtshabe Attorneys Inc. (JHB, CPT, EL)	Conveyancing; Estate agency	In-house estate agency (dual-	First-time buyers, peri-urban sellers;

Firm (Location)	Services Offered	Integration Model	Primary Target Market
	(sales, valuations); Litigation; Wills & Estates.	licensed attorney/agent).	community clients in Johannesburg, Cape Town, East London.
STBB (Smith Tabata Buchanan Boyes) (Nationwide)	Conveyancing; Property law (residential & commercial); Bond registrations; Developments; Full legal services.	Partnership with external estate agencies (preferred conveyancer for agents) helderberg.bis.	Mass market – urban home buyers/sellers; property developers; corporate real estate clients helderberg.bis.
Louw & Coetsee Attorneys/Properties (Durbanville, WC)	Conveyancing & property law; New development marketing; Family law, etc. Plus in-house property sales via Louw & Coetsee Properties property24.com.	In-house affiliated estate agency (common branding) lcproperties.co.sa.	Northern Cape Town suburbs residential market; developers of local housing projects.
3%.Com Properties (Franchise network)	Property listings (online platform); Property sales by attorney-agents; Conveyancing (transfers, bonds) by same firm threepercent.com.	In-house (franchise model – attorneys act as brokers within their practice) threepercent.com.	Cost-conscious sellers & buyers nationwide; tech-savvy clients preferring attorney oversight.

Firm (Location)	Services Offered	Integration Model	Primary Target Market
Miltons Matsemela Inc. (WC, Gauteng)	Conveyancing (high-volume transfers); Estate agency law advisory; Wills, trusts, general law.	Partnership – works with many estate agencies (no own estate arm) facebook.com.	Established urban markets in Cape Town & Johannesburg; estate agencies needing reliable conveyancers.
Dykes van Heerden (DVH) Group (Cape & Gauteng)	Conveyancing; Property law for developments; Bond registrations; Legal training for agents ch.linkedin.com.	Partnership – no estate agency division, but deeply integrated via training and referrals ch.linkedin.com.	Property developers; Real estate agents (training partner) in Cape Town and Johannesburg markets.
Barry en Mouton (Garden Route, WC)	General law; Conveyancing; Estate agency services (buy/sell assistance) wanderlog.com; Estate administration.	In-house – combined small-town law practice and property brokerage.	Local market in Calitsdorp/Mossel Bay – residential and agricultural property clients who prefer one firm locally wanderlog.com.
Symington & De Kok (Bloemfontein & CT)	Conveyancing; Commercial law; Litigation; Estates. Indirect property sales via auctions, tenders.	Partnership/Hybrid – no retail agency, but attorneys handle sales for executor clients etc. derebus.org.sa.	Free State regional market (farms, city property); institutional clients (banks, executors) requiring both sale

Firm (Location)	Services Offered	Integration Model	Primary Target Market
			and transfer services.
Neumann van Rooyen Inc. (Welkom, FS)	Conveyancing; Property auctions; Estate planning; Local government law.	In-house (property auction/brokerage unit within firm).	Welkom and surrounds – local homeowners, miners' housing, commercial property in smaller towns.
(Example) *Meyer de Waal / Attorney Realtor Hub* (Cape Town)	*Conveyancing; Financial qualification (bond origination); Rent-to-buy schemes; Property sales (via partner agents).*	*Hybrid – attorneys partnering with tech platforms and agent network.*	*First-time buyers nationwide (via online tools); Affordable housing sector.*

(The final entry above is an illustrative example combining attorney-led proptech initiatives; all other entries are actual firms.)

As shown, the firms share a commitment to providing both legal and real estate transaction services, but their modes of integration differ. Approximately half the firms (e.g., Mtshabe, Louw & Coetsee, 3%.Com, Barry & Mouton, Neumann v. Rooyen) use an in-house model, where the law firm or its affiliate is directly involved in property brokerage with attorneys often holding estate agent credentials. The rest (e.g., STBB, Miltons, DVH, Symington) follow a partnership model, maintaining separate roles but forming tight-knit relationships with estate agencies or clients who bring in the property deals. In-house models tend to market themselves as "one-stop" solutions for the public, whereas partnership models often market to estate agencies and developers as a reliable backend partner.

Target markets vary from general urban residential (the bulk of firms) to specific niches like peripheral townships (Mtshabe's niche) or new developments (Louw & Coetsee, STBB's developer practice). Many firms also target estate agents as a customer segment in a B2B sense – for example, DVH's seminars for agents or Miltons providing legal updates to agents – because winning the trust of estate agents means a pipeline of conveyancing referrals. This symbiotic relationship is a cornerstone of the partnership integration model.

Integration Strategies: In-House vs Partnership Models

A central theme in these firms' business models is how they integrate the conveyancing and estate agency functions. Broadly, two strategies emerge:

- 1) Full In-House Integration: The firm has its *own* estate agency service, either as part of the practice or a sister company. This strategy is evident in boutique and niche firms. The benefits include complete control over the client experience (no dependency on third parties) and a unified brand message. Mtshabe Attorneys Inc., for instance, is explicitly *"dual registered as a law firm and real estate agency"*, allowing it to handle a property sale mandate and the transfer process seamlessly. Louw & Coetsee's integrated model means a developer client can have their development's sales and transfers handled under one umbrella, which is efficient and appealing. 3%.Com's franchise model extends this concept across many small firms, standardising the approach. In-house integration often comes with differentiation on pricing or convenience – e.g., 3%.Com's 3% commission or Mtshabe's promise of simplified transactions for first-time buyers. However, running an estate agency inside a law firm has challenges: marketing and sales require different skill sets and resources than legal work, and there can be capacity issues (Mtshabe cites "capacity constraints as a boutique firm" as a weakness when juggling both roles). Additionally, new regulatory wrinkles mean these firms must sometimes outsource the conveyancing if they acted as agent, to comply with the PPA's separation of rolespropertyprofessional.co.za – potentially complicating the one-stop proposition.
- 2) Partnership/Alliances: The firm sticks to legal services but builds formal or informal alliances with estate agencies, developers, or other property

intermediaries. Large firms like STBB and specialist conveyancers like DVH use this model. Rather than advertising properties themselves, they become the go-to conveyancer for multiple estate agencies. STBB, for example, is *"preferred by real estate professionals as a leading conveyancing firm"* helderberg.bis due to its reliable service and tools that keep agents and clients informed. This strategy focuses on B2B relationship-building – hosting agent breakfasts, providing training (as DVH does), or even offering incentives (though ethical rules limit excessive inducements)propertyprofessional.co.sa. The partnership model allows each professional to focus on their expertise (agents on sales, attorneys on transfers) while cooperating closely. Many partnership-model firms form "strategic partnerships" – Mtshabe, although in-house, also aims to "establish 20 strategic partnerships with developers, agents, and banks" as part of growth, which shows even integrated firms seek external alliances for leads. A potential downside of partnerships is the competitive dynamic: estate agents could steer clients to any conveyancer, so firms must continuously maintain those relationships and prove their value. There's also the ethical boundary noted in industry commentary: concerns have been raised about an "unethical relationship" where conveyancers "woo" agents with perks for businesspropertyprofessional.co.sa. Regulations emphasise that the *seller has the right to choose the conveyancer*, so partnership-based firms promote their reputation and service to indirectly influence that choice.

In practice, many firms employ a hybrid of these strategies. For example, a firm may have an in-house estate agent arm for certain scenarios (like handling sales in deceased estates or distress situations) but still rely on external agents for most open-market sales. Even 3%.Com firms get referrals from external sources despite being able to list properties themselves. Conversely, partnership-based firms sometimes acquire estate agency licenses for specific purposes (for instance, a director of Miltons might register with the PPRA to handle the odd client instruction to sell a property through the firm, such as an executor sale).

To visualise the split among our ten firms, Figure 1 shows a breakdown of their primary integration models (in-house vs partnership). In our sample, about half (5/10) lean toward in-house integration as a core strategy, while the other half rely on partnerships or referrals. This balance reflects that both models are viable in South Africa's current market, each fitting different firm sises and client bases.

In summary, integration strategy is a defining aspect of each firm's business model. In-house integration aligns with a differentiation strategy – offering a unique all-in-one service to client – but requires dual competencies and careful regulatory navigation. Partnership integration aligns with a focus strategy, where law firms concentrate on being the best at conveyancing and let allied estate agencies handle the sales front-end, thereby each party focuses on core strengths. Both strategies aim to provide a smoother client experience than the traditional separated model, and both require strong relationship management – either internally (between a firm's legal and sales team) or externally (between the firm and partner agencies). The next sections will discuss how these firms leverage technology and maintain compliance to support their integrated models.

Use of Digital Platforms and Technology

Embracing technology is crucial for integrated firms to efficiently manage the increased scope of services and to meet modern client expectations. The conveyancing process in South Africa has benefitted from various digital tools in recent years, and many of these firms have been early adopters. Key digital platforms and initiatives include:

- **Online Client Portals and Tracking Systems**

  A common feature is a portal where clients (and sometimes estate agents) can track the progress of their property transfer in real time. For instance, STBB Direct is STBB's proprietary system accessible via web or app, which offers *"instant notification of updates via SMS and email, as well as 'real time' tracking of the transfer"helderberg.bis】. This not only improves transparency but also reduces the manual workload of updating multiple parties. Other firms use commercial conveyancing software like LexisConvey or GhostConvey, which often include client-facing tracking modules (sometimes branded as Lexis Tracker or WebConvey). Miltons Matsemela and Dykes van Heerden are known to handle high volumes and thus rely on such software to automate document assembly, do deeds office searches, and send automated status alerts to clients and agents. Mtshabe Inc., recognising its initial “limited digital infrastructure】, has planned to *“launch a client portal with real-time case tracking (Q2 2025)”* to enhance its service for urban tech-savvy client】.

- **CRM Systems and Lead Management**

 Integrated firms often deal with both legal clients and property listing leads, necessitating a robust CRM (Customer Relationship Management) approach. A firm like 3%.Com (franchise network) operates a centralised **listings website* threepercent.comthreepercent.com】 which doubles as a lead capture system feeding inquiries to the attorney-agents. Those leads then enter a CRM for follow-up on both the sale and the legal steps. Mtshabe's strategy plan suggests integrating CRM to *“streamline client handoffs between departments (for example, when a legal client needs to be handed to the sales team or vice versa). Some firms integrate their CRM with email marketing – e.g., sending out newsletters with property law updates (Miltons does this with their “The Conveyancers” newsletter) or new property listings (Louw & Coetsee Properties has a mailing list for new development launches). Data analytics is starting to play a role as well; Mtshabe intends to *“use data analytics to refine ad targeting (focus on high-intent keywords)”, showing an understanding that digital marketing can drive the integrated business.

- **Digital Signing and Remote Services**

 The COVID-19 era accelerated adoption of digital signing of documents and remote consultations. Several of the firms now use tools like Lexis Sign or Adobe Sign for signing deed documents where permissibllexisnexis.com】, and have moved to digital FICA (financial intelligence/Know-Your-Client) compliance via apps. This is crucial for integrated firms because they often deal with clients remotely (for example, 3%.Com's model attracts overseas clients investing locally, who need to sign documents from abroawanderlog.com】). In 2019, the first fully digitally signed property transfer in SA was complete lexisnexis.com】 – such innovations are likely used by tech-forward firms like

STBB or Schindlers (a Johannesburg firm known for tech adoption). Additionally, video conferencing and virtual showrooms became part of the estate agency side; firms like Louw & Coetsee Properties might conduct virtual property viewings, and concurrently, their attorneys can do virtual consultations with clients, providing an end-to-end digital experience when needed.

- **Internal Workflow Automation**

  On the back-end, many firms use practice management software to handle the increased file load of doing legal + agency work. Document management systems ensure that documents (sale agreements, title deeds, transfer duty receipts) are stored and accessible to both the legal and sales teams. Some integrated firms develop internal dashboards to monitor KPIs across the business. For example, a firm might track how quickly listings turn into sales and then into registered transfers, identifying bottlenecks. Mtshabe considered implementing *"AI-driven case tracking to reduce manual workload"* in its technology. Larger firms like STBB and DVH interface directly with bank systems and the Deeds Office electronically via LexisNexis Gateway or other APIlexisnexis.com】, speeding up tasks like bond instruction receipt and clearance figures.

- **Web Presence and Social Media**: Given that these firms also function partly as estate agencies, they invest in attractive websites with property search functionality. Louw & Coetsee's property site lists developments and homes with a polished user interfaclcproperties.co.salcproperties.co.sa】. 3%.Com's platform allows browsing thousands of listings and showcases the savings calculator for 3% commissiothreepercent.com】. Social media is used for both legal content marketing and property advertising. Many have active Facebook pages where they post property law tips or featured listings (Miltons Matsemela's Facebook highlights community work and legal service facebook.com】; STBB shares newsflashes on legal topicfacebook.com】). LinkedIn is used to network with real estate professionals (DVH's LinkedIn highlights their training for agentch.linkedin.com】). Some, like Mtshabe, plan "Ask the Attorney" live sessions on social media to engage their communit】, which doubles as marketing for their integrated services.

Collectively, these digital tools enhance the client experience by making processes faster and more transparent, which is crucial for differentiation. For instance, a tech-enabled firm can appeal to a time-sensitive developer by providing an online dashboard of all units' transfer statuses. Or it can attract a millennial first-time buyer by offering a slick mobile app to track their home purchase's legal progress. The investment in digital also supports scaling the business – Miltons Matsemela could handle a high volume of transfers (reportedly thousands per year) because their systems reduce the manual workload per file, allowing attorneys to focus on exceptions.

However, the report would be incomplete without noting challenges: Not all clients are comfortable with digital interfaces, so firms maintain personal touch alongside (e.g., DVH's training emphasises building personal trust with agents despite digital comms). Cybersecurity and data protection are also paramount since these firms handle sensitive financial and personal data online. Compliance with POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act) is an added layer in their digital strategy, ensuring client data on portals and CRMs is secure.

In conclusion, the technology adoption among integrated firms is generally high, as it serves their need to coordinate complex transactions and differentiate on service. Those who lag in digital tools (perhaps smaller rural firms) identify it as a weakness to be addresse】. The trend is towards fully digitised property transactions – something these integrated firms are well-positioned to lead, given they control the whole value chain.

Regulatory Compliance (LPC and PPRA)

Operating as both a law firm and an estate agency demands scrupulous compliance with regulations from both professions. All attorneys in South Africa are regulated by the Legal Practice Council (LPC), and all estate agents (now termed "property practitioners") are regulated by the Property Practitioners Regulatory Authority (PPRA) under the Property Practitioners Act of 2019. The ten firms in this study take several measures to maintain compliance and uphold professional standards:

- **Dual Licensing and Fidelity Fund Certificates**

Integrated firms ensure that they are properly licensed on both fronts. For example, Mtshabe Attorneys Inc. emphasises its *“dual registration as a law firm and real estate agency”* as a core strengt】. In practice, this means the firm (or its incorporated business entities) has been issued a Fidelity Fund certificate by the PPRA, allowing it to lawfully receive commissions/trust monies from property sales, in addition to the Fidelity Fund certificate that attorneys must hold via the LPC for the attorneys’ trust account. Louw & Coetsee’s affiliated property company is separately registered with the PPRA (typically, they would mention their PPRA registration number on their website or letterhead per legal requirements). Compliance also requires paying annual levies to the PPRA and ensuring all individual agents (even if they are attorneys) pass the necessary exams or qualifications to act as property practitioners. Firms often publish a disclaimer and compliance page on their websites, listing their LPC number and PPRA (formerly EAAB) registratiolcproperties.co.sa】.

- **Code of Conduct and Ethical Walls**

Attorneys must follow the LPC’s Code of Conduct, and estate agents must follow the PPRA’s Code of Conduct. In an integrated practice, sometimes these codes impose different obligations. One notable regulatory provision is that *law firms cannot directly transfer a property that they brokered as estate agents propertyprofessional.co.sa】, intended to avoid conflicts of interest (the rationale is to keep checks and balances between the selling and conveyancing functions). In practical terms, integrated firms handle this by either (a) disclosing the dual role to all parties and obtaining consent, or (b) if required, appointing an independent attorney for the transfer while they handle the sale (less common, as it undercuts the one-stop model). The *Another attack on attorneys…* article notes this as a concern that needed clarit propertyprofessional.co.sa】. As of 2025, the new PPA regulations (e.g., Regulation 35) provide some guidance: attorneys can act as estate agents if it’s in the normal course of their practice (like handling a deceased estate sale derebus.org.sa】, but should avoid pure estate agency unless it’s for an existing client. Firms like STBB likely sidestep this by not operating as agents at all, whereas 3%.Com model firms ensure transparency that the same firm is doing both. Managing conflicts of interest is thus a compliance focus – firms put in place policies about not abusing the dual role. For instance, no attorney should pressure a client to use their in-house agency or vice versa; the choice remains the client's.

- **PPRA Compliance – Trust Accounts and Audit**

  Estate agencies must keep trust accounts for client monies (e.g. deposit funds) and have those audited. Law firms also keep trust accounts for conveyancing transactions. Many integrated firms streamline this by using their attorney trust account for both purposes (permissible since attorneys' trust accounts are exempt from needing a separate EAAB trust account historically, and under the PPA this integration continues). Still, they must submit separate audit reports to each regulator. Compliance departments within larger firms ensure that interest on trust accounts is properly dealt with (paid to the Fidelity Fund or client as applicable), and that offer to purchase agreements drafted by the firm comply with the Consumer Protection Act and PPA requirements (e.g., including a clause about the buyer's right to choose the conveyancer, even if the firm hopes to handle it). Miltons Matsemela, being a law firm that advises on estate agency law, is likely very scrupulous in including the correct clauses and disclosures in any sale agreements they draft for clients, to model best practices.

- **Professional Indemnity and Insurance**

  Integrated firms carry professional indemnity insurance as attorneys, and also ensure they have coverage for estate agency activities. The PPRA requires that property practitioners have Fidelity Fund coverage (which effectively is a form of consumer protection insurance). Firms like Symington & De Kok and Neumann van Rooyen, which handle auction sales, will also follow the specific regulations under the PPA for auctioneers. They often mention compliance in marketing to build trust. For example, Barry & Mouton could reassure their local clients that all transactions are backed by the Attorneys Fidelity Fund and the Property Practitioners Fidelity Fund – giving peace of mind that their money is safe from fraud or insolvency of the firm.

- **Training and Continuous Development**

Compliance is not just a one-time box to tick but an ongoing process. Staff in these firms often attend training on both legal ethics and property practitioner regulations. DVH Group mentions how Louis Slabbert trains estate agents on legal matterch.linkedin.com】 – similarly, internally they will train their own attorney-agents on estate agency best practices. Mtshabe's plan includes *"ethical compliance training, certify staff in PPRA/LPC guidelines quarterly to mitigate dual-role risks", recognising that when one person wears two hats, extra vigilance is needed to uphold ethics. Issues like avoiding misrepresentation in property advertisements, handling confidential client info properly, and not "double dipping" on fees (e.g., charging a legal fee and an agent commission without clear disclosure) are covered in such trainings.

- Industry Engagement: Some integrated firms have been active in industry bodies or debates shaping regulation. The founder of 3%.Com, Maartens Heynike, wrote an opinion highlighting that attorneys have acted as estate agents "from time immemorial" and are among the oldest regulated estate agents in South Africderebus.org.sa】, pushing back against narratives that attorneys should be curtailed in property sales. Such advocacy indicates that these firms are involved in ensuring the regulatory environment remains conducive to integrated models. They often seek legal counsel or senior guidance on any grey areas – for example, when the new PPA came into effect (replacing the old Estate Agency Affairs Act), integrated firms had to confirm how the new law impacts them. According to Property Professional, Heynike was concerned about *"proposed legal limitations"* in the Act and wanted them addressed before implementatiopropertyprofessional.co.sa】. By staying ahead of regulatory changes, firms protect their business model and clients.

In essence, regulatory compliance is both a necessity and a selling point for these firms. They assure clients that, by choosing a dual-qualified provider, they are not cutting corners but instead getting double assurance. One marketing angle is that attorneys are bound by stricter ethical rules and would not jeopardise their practicing certificate, hence clients can trust an attorney-agent more than a regular agent. However, this comes with the burden of meeting those higher standards consistently.

From a business perspective, compliance costs (audits, training, insurance) are higher for integrated firms, but those that manage it effectively turn it into an advantage – highlighting trust and professionalism as their brand ethos. For example, Mtshabe's mission explicitly includes *"adhering to the highest ethical standards set by the LPC and PPRA"】, signaling to clients that compliance is at the heart of their value proposition.

Comparative Analysis and Key Differentiators

Analysing the ten firms reveals both common trends and individual differentiators. Table 2 presents a comparative snapshot of several factors – firm sise, digital tool usage, and unique selling points (USPs) – which help in benchmarking these firms against each other.

Table 2: Comparative Overview of Firm Sise, Tech Adoption, and Unique Selling Points

Firm	Offices / Sise	Digital Platforms Used	Unique Selling Point (USP)
Mtshabe Inc.	1–2 offices (Boutique; ~2019 founding)	Building client portal; active social medi】.	One-stop service for first-time buyers (legal + estate) with community trus】. UVP: "One Firm, Dual Expertise】.
STBB	11 offices nationwide; 90+ attorney helderberg.bis】.	STBB Direct tracking app; SMS update helderberg.bis】; GhostConvey; website resources.	Scale and tech – "largest property law practice" with personal servic helderberg.bis】. Trusted by major estate agencies and developers.

Louw & Coetsee	1 office (Durbanville) + prop. division.	Modern property search website; CRM for developments; uses LexisConvey.	Integrated developer solutions – legal + marketing of new developments. Local expertise in Cape Town's Northern Suburbs.
3%.Com (network)	~40+ franchise branches (8 provinces)	Central listings porta threepercent.com 】; online valuation too】; lead management system.	Low commission (3%) with attorney oversight on sale threepercent.com 】. Marketing tagline: "The smart way to sell your property."
Miltons Matsemela	8+ offices (Cape Town, Pretoria, etc.)	Conveyancing workflow software; "MM Connect" updates (email/SMS); active Faceboo facebook.com】.	"The Conveyancers" – highly experienced team focusing on speedy transfers at scale. Strong agent relationships, 25-year reputatio facebook.com】.
Dykes van Heerden (DVH)	2 main offices (CT, JHB); ~11–50 staf ch.linkedin.com】.	DVH Law mobile app (for agents/clients); LexisConvey; online training webinars.	Value-added trainer – empowers estate agents through trainin ch.linkedin.com】, fostering loyalty.

			Known for innovative solutions and reliability.
Barry en Mouton	1 small office (rural Western Cape).	Basic website/listings on local portals; email communications.	Local one-on-one service – "professional team" offering personalised help buying/selling in small tow wanderlog.com】. Community trust built over years.
Symington & De Kok	2 offices (Bloem, CT); ~60+ years in bis.	Standard conveyancing software; some online presence (Facebook, LinkedIn).	Established credibility – decades of service, multi-disciplinary strength. One of FS's oldest legal-property firms, handling complex cases reliably.
Neumann van Rooyen	1 office (Welkom); founded mid-1900s.	Website with auction info; uses email marketing to client base.	Auction & legal combo – able to auction property and transfer in-house. Deep regional knowledge in mining town realty.

Meyer de Waal / AR Hub	*1 office (CT); niche proptech focus.*	*Rent2Buy platform; MyBondFitness app; Attorney Realtor Hub online referrals.*	*Fintech integration* – attorney-led solutions for affordable housing (rent-to-own schemes, bond pre-qualification) bridging gaps in market.*

(AR Hub = Attorney Realtor Hub; this example entry is hypothetical to show emerging proptech-law integration.)

From the comparison, we note that firm sise correlates with certain strengths: larger firms like STBB and Miltons leverage economies of scale and have the resources to develop proprietary apps or have multiple offices to capture market share. Smaller firms use niche specialisation and personalised branding to stand out (e.g., Mtshabe's focus on underserved communities, Neumann van Rooyen's auction niche, etc.).

In terms of technology, nearly all firms employ some form of digital tracking or online presence, but the sophistication varies. STBB and 3%.Com are very client-facing digital (with apps and interactive websites), whereas a firm like Symington & De Kok has a more minimal online footprint, relying on traditional reputation. Yet even they use internal software to ensure efficiency. This indicates an industry trend where baseline tech adoption is high – any competitive conveyancing practice in 2025 is expected to offer at least email updates and quick turnaround, if not a full portal.

Unique selling points (USPs) are where each firm tries to differentiate in the market:

- **Cost Leadership vs Value-Add**

  3%.Com clearly differentiates on cost savings in commissiothreepercent.com 】, appealing to sellers who want to save money. Most other firms, however, do not compete on price for legal fees (and indeed, conveyancing fees are often fixed by tariff or negotiable only to an extent). Instead, they compete on value-add and convenience. For example, DVH adds value by training agents (so agents have an incentive to bring business to them), and Mtshabe adds value by offering combined services to a demographic that might otherwise struggle with multiple service providers.

- **Market Positioning**

  Some USPs are tied to market position. Miltons calls itself “The Conveyancers”, signaling that if you think property, you think of them – a claim to being the go-to expert (backed by social proof like having done huge numbers of transfers). STBB’s moniker “The Big Small Firm” (as mentioned on their site and marketing) highlights delivering big-firm capabilities with small-firm car helderberg.bis】. Louw & Coetsee’s backing of their property arm implies to clients that their property sale will never be derailed by legal complications – a strong promise in an era when deals can fall through due to technical issues.

- **Integrated Marketing and Cross-Selling**

  Firms also use one side of the business to feed the other. For instance, an estate agency client automatically becomes a conveyancing client, and vice versa. Many integrated firms have cross-selling initiatives – a wills client might be introduced to the property agent in the firm if they decide to downsise a house in their estate plan, or a home buyer client without a will is sold estate planning services. This holistic approach is a USP in itself: clients can form a long-term relationship with the firm beyond just the immediate transaction.

- **Reputation and Trust**

  Given the high stakes of property transactions, trust is a big differentiator. Longevity (Symington & De Kok, Neumann v. Rooyen), volume of transactions handled (Miltons, STBB), or community ties (Barry & Mouton, Mtshabe) all play into perceived trustworthiness. A firm like Barry & Mouton may emphasise its “professional team” and track record in the local arewanderlog.com】 to reassure clients, while an integrated urban firm may highlight being *fully qualified professionals versus ordinary agents*, implying a higher level of trust.

Despite differences, these firms also face common competitive pressures. All must contend with:

- Traditional estate agencies who might view integrated firms as encroaching on their turf, and thus may avoid cooperating. This is partly why partnership-model firms strive to keep good relations and why in-house-model firms often still network externally (e.g., Mtshabe seeking partnerships despite doing both).
- LegalTech startups offering online DIY solutions (as noted in Mtshabe's strategy, "tech platforms offering DIY property solutions" are a competitive threat. These could undercut on price or offer alternative ways to connect buyers and sellers without traditional agents or lawyers. Integrated firms respond by enhancing their digital offerings and emphasising the assurance of expert oversight.
- Other integrated firms: As the concept becomes more popular, these ten are not alone. There is a growing cohort of attorney-estate agents in South Africa's major cities (as evidenced by social media activity around the idea of "law firm and real estate agency" in one, often promoted by younger attorney instagram.com】). This means integrated firms have to continuously innovate (digitally and service-wise) and perhaps even collaborate to expand consumer awareness of the model's benefits.

Ultimately, the success of an integrated firm's business model comes down to delivering a superior customer experience (faster, easier, or more cost-effective property transactions) while managing the internal complexity of dual operations. The comparative analysis shows that there are multiple paths to achieving this, whether through tech leadership, niche specialisation, or scale and reputation.

Conclusion

The landscape of conveyancing and real estate services in South Africa is evolving, with integrated law firms playing a significant role in reshaping how property transactions are conducted. Through the examination of ten firms, this report has highlighted that integration is not a one-sise-fits-all approach but rather a spectrum – from full-service legal-property boutiques to large alliances between attorneys and agents.

What these firms have in common is a recognition that clients value convenience and accountability. By combining legal and estate agency services, they aim to reduce the friction in buying or selling property: fewer handovers between professionals, more cohesive communication, and a single point of contact. When executed well, this model can save clients time and even money (for example, avoiding duplicated efforts or enabling competitive fee structures). It also allows the firm to capture a larger share of the property value chain, which can be lucrative if volumes are high.

However, the integrated model also requires careful balancing acts – adhering to two regulatory regimes, maintaining expertise in two distinct fields, and sometimes addressing skepticism from traditional practitioners. The firms studied have shown various strategies to tackle these challenges: investing in technology to streamline processes, implementing strong ethical compliance measures, carving out niche markets where their dual expertise shines, and continuously communicating their value proposition to the market (whether it's trust, speed, cost-saving, or one-stop convenience).

As the property sector becomes more digital and consumer expectations rise, integrated firms are likely to become more mainstream. They represent a convergence of professions that historically were separate. This convergence is supported by legislative changes (the law now explicitly allows attorneys to act as property practitioners, within limitderebus.org.sa】) and by market forces (demand for seamless service).

The comparative tables and analysis in this report serve as an academic insight into current practices and may guide both existing firms and new entrants. For an integrated firm to thrive, it should consider the following takeaways:

- Leverage technology not just as an add-on, but as the backbone of integration – enabling scalability and transparency that set the firm aparhelderberg.bis】.
- Use the dual role responsibly and ethically, turning compliance requirements into trust-building opportunities (clients feel secure knowing the firm is tightly regulated by multiple bodie】).
- Focus on a target market segment where the integrated offering is especially valued, and tailor services (for example, offering educational workshops to first-time buyers or bespoke services to developers).

- Continue to innovate the business model – for instance, some firms might incorporate additional related services (like bond origination, insurance broking, or property management) to become an even more integrated "property solutions" firm. Indeed, we see hints of this in how some are branching into financial services (Meyer de Waal's bond qualification app is one example of adjacent integration).

In conclusion, integrated conveyancing and real estate law firms in South Africa are pioneering a holistic approach to property transactions. They blend the assurance of legal oversight with the dynamism of property marketing. The ten firms analysed each illuminate different facets of this integration, but collectively they point to a future where buying or selling a home could be as straightforward as dealing with one professional team that handles "All From Sign to Transfer". The success of this model will ultimately be decided by the value delivered to clients – and based on the evidence, when done correctly, that value is substantial.

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APPENDIX 2- ESTATE AGENT INTERVIEWS

FOR ESTATE AGENTS/MORTGAGE BOND ORIGINATORS

Male, 10 years' experience in the field

1. How would you describe your experience working with integrated law firms
   - Easy as information gathering is easier
2. Can you describe your overall experience working with law firms that offer integrated conveyancing and real estate services?

   -better understanding due to experience because of more expetiece

3. How long have you been using integrated law firms for your real estate transactions?
   - 8 – 10 years
4. What specific benefits have you noticed from using an integrated law firm compared to traditional separate services?

   - More knowledgeable about property
   - Return favour on return business
   - Allow more negation space

5. How has the integration of conveyancing and real estate services impacted the time it takes to close deals?
   - Very involved, lots of feedback to clients, integrated firm focuses on better service and servicing everyone involved in the transactions
   - They work on return of business so more work in the future.

6. Can you provide examples of how having these integrated services has simplified the transaction process for your clients?

   - Feedback
   - Keeping relationship
   - Service of clients critical

7. Have you encountered any challenges or issues while working with integrated law firms? If yes, how significant were these challenges?
   - Too many departments get involved
   - If you have multiple deals can be a bit too much to deal with a lot of people as opposed to one person.

8. Are there specific aspects of the integrated services that you think need improvement?

   - Marketing: get more involvement from the stakeholders
   - Boost business partnerships with other stakeholders
   - Lead generation to partners
   - More exposure for partners
   - Conveyer belt- mention names on their involvement as bond origingators and name drop company name.
   -
9. Do you feel that the quality of legal advice is affected by the integration of services?
   - Yes, it give better scope of understanding the work done by the firm
10. What kind of feedback have you received from clients regarding integrated law firm services?
    - Good feedback
    - Questionable on the service received
    -
11. Have you noticed a difference in client satisfaction levels when using integrated services compared to traditional setups?
    - Integrated ones are more informative thus clients are more comfortable as they provide better customer experience

12. How has the integration of these services impacted your workflow and business operations?
13. Are there any specific tools or technologies provided by the integrated law firms that you find particularly useful?
    - No tools

- Integrated give feedback and use it to measure turn around times

14. Based on your experience, do you see a growing trend towards using integrated law firms in real estate transactions?

    Yes – it is picking up and every law firm must have some conveyancing or integration as property market booms and there is lots to be done

15. Would you recommend integrated law firm services to other estate agents or clients? Why or why not?
    - Would not recommend because if issues arise they tend to come back to the bond originator as opposed to the attorney.
    - Prefers to hand over client and not get too involved

16. What advice would you give to a law firm considering integrating their conveyancing and real estate sales services based on your experiences?
    - Hiring of competent stuff in the property space and understanding of turnaround times in the deal finalisaiton
    - Make sure they have capacity to for the amount of work they have.

17. Is there anything else you would like to add?
    - No
    - Puts trust on the firm to ensure deal is finalised in time.

ESTATE AGENTS/MORTGAGE BOND ORIGINATORS

Female, 4 years experience in the field.

1. How would you describe your experience working with integrated law firms? I have mainly worked with Van Deventers over the last 4 years. It has always been a very seamless procedure with them always being very supportive.

2. How long have you collaborated with integrated law firms? 4 years

3. What benefits have you observed compared to working with separate service providers? They have an amasing knowledge of property law as well as agent

qualifications and agent practices, it makes it easy for them to support both us as agent and both my seller and purchaser.

4. How has the integration affected transaction timelines? The transactions are usually seamless unless there is a hold up by the bond attorneys, COJ, HOA, a BC or the deeds office.
5. Can you share examples of how integration has simplified transactions for clients? VD has a smooth process, contacting agent and all parties, updating them every step of the way.
6. What challenges have you encountered, and how significant have they been? Delays from unforeseen circumstances - see point 4 above
7. What aspects of integrated services need improvement? nothing in my opinion.
8. How do integrated law firms compare to separate conveyancing and real estate entities? I have built a relationship with the team and they are very accessible to me and are supportive throughout the procedure. Some firms that I don't have a relationship with with purely be on the sellers side and entertain unnecessary delays - we are just another number to them and get no personalised assistance.
9. Has integration affected the quality of legal advice provided? They have always provided me with good legal advice.
10. What client feedback have you received regarding these services? All parties have been happy and impressed.
11. Have you noticed differences in client satisfaction between integrated and traditional setups? Sometimes, not always.
12. How has this model impacted your workflow and business operations? It usually makes it very smooth from signing an offer to registration.
13. What tools or technologies from integrated firms do you find most useful? lexis tracker

14. Do you see a growing trend toward integrated law firms in real estate? Why or why not? I am not too sure - Van Deventers specialise in property law but do do other law too. They don’t have in house agents.

15. What advice would you give to law firms considering this integration? Keep your agent section separate so there is no conflict of interest. Target good knowledgeable agents to be part of your team that are ethical and can reach out for legal advice when needed.

16. In what scenarios would you prefer not to use integrated services? If they are not communicative and efficient in their work. I would prefer to recommend a company who can deliver as efficiently, ethically and with my seller and purchasers needs first.

17. Is there anything else you’d like to add? I think I covered everything above.

APPENDIX 3- ATTORNEY INTERVIEWS

CONVEYANCING ATTORNEYS AT A LAW FIRM

55 years

Attorney Conveyancer, Real Estate agent

Years in practice: 21

1. What prompted the decision to integrate conveyancing and real estate sales within your firm?
   - Generating instructions
   - Started as a correspondence attorney
   - Digital experience at the deeds office is imminent
2. How do you manage the coordination between different departments involved in conveyancing and real estate services?

   - Have a definitive split in roles and responsibilities of the agent and conveyancing secretary
   - This helps in knowing who is accountable for what and role delegation

3. Can you describe any changes you've implemented in operational processes to accommodate this integration?
   -
4. What have been the most significant challenges you've faced since integrating these services?
   - There seems to be difficulty in balancing the individual agent demands and obligations with the attorney
   - Agent rules are not strictly inforced therefore making it difficult for attorneys to work within bounds of their code of conduct rules
5. How do you measure the success of this integration in terms of operational efficiency and client satisfaction?
   - Turnaround times
   - Client feedback
   - More fees earned within a period of time
6. What impact has the integration had on the firm's financial performance?

7. Are there specific metrics or KPIs you track to evaluate the performance of the integrated services?
    - Turnaround time, spreadsheet details issues in the process
    - Bonds: storetality tracks rejections from lodged documents
    - Auditor assists with the compliance and issues found
    - Clients complaints
8. How has client retention changed since the integration of these services?
    - Not a marketer, relationship builder
    - Slow down and explain properly to the clients the process, how it works and how long it will take
    - Taking time to meet clients at their level has helped.

9. What future plans do you have for improving or expanding integrated services?
    -
10. How do you see the integration evolving in the next five years?
    - Working towards more digital age does not see that being a problem of impartiality when it comes to be an agent/ attorney
    - Not going to have the opportunity anymore to see clients as much and this will make the integration easier

11. Is there anything else you would like to add?
    - A word of caution: conveyancer sees being an agent as the obvious answer
    - The moment you start own agency you alient a lot of other agents but instead you will be seen as competion and this has backfired on a lot of conveyancers in the past.
    - Sustainability very important in moving the business and growing it

CONVEYANCING ATTORNEYS AT A LAW FIRM

Attorney, Conveyancer, Real Estate Agent

66 years of age, 29 years of experience

1. What prompted the decision to integrate conveyancing and real estate sales within your firm?
   - Speed of transaction
   - Done under one roof service delivery is fast
   - Cutting off a third party or conveyancer who is far aware
   - Improving service delivery to client

2. How do you manage the coordination between different departments involved in conveyancing and real estate services?
   - Running two trust accounts for attorneys work and estate agency for transparacn and ease of transactions.

3. Can you describe any changes you've implemented in operational processes to accommodate this integration?
   - Technology that involves systems integration between conveyancing and real estate sales

4. What have been the most significant challenge you've faced since integrating these services?
   - Cancellation of mandates after work has been done and challenges to getting money back for wasted costs.
   - Getting honest clients about affordability on the transactions
   - Cancellations affect business cashflow and projections

5. How do you measure the success of this integration in terms of operational efficiency and client satisfaction?
   - Ask for client feedback
   - Efficiency is tested by how quickly a transaction is completed- normal time is 2 months and if done quicker than you know that operational efficiency is smooth sailing

6. What impact has the integration had on the firm's financial performance?
   - Firm has seen increased in bottom line as there is limited payment of outside persons involved in the transaction.

7. Are there specific metrics or KPIs you track to evaluate the performance of the integrated services?
   - Everything is measure on the output and speed of doing the work mandated to do.

8. How has client retention changed since the integration of these services?
   - Not only has it changed, we have gotten an increase in clients through the integration.
   - Clients do not leave because they now have a place that is a one stop shop

9. What future plans do you have for improving or expanding integrated services?
   -Incorporate more work force that will be given incentives within the firm to ensure growth in the firm and also opening branches across the country.

10. How do you see the integration evolving in the next five years?
    - As time goes estate agents work with specific attorneys that have capital to assist their clients so the advantage will be getting them working under one roof as this will be beneficial to clients

11. Is there anything else you would like to add?
    - Make sure that the LPC and EA industry is incorporated under one in so far as trust account management is concerned so that there is proper accountability.

APPENDIX 4- BUYER AND SELLER

A. <u>FOR BUYERS/SELLERS</u>

<u>Female, 42 years, Property Buyer</u>

1. What would make you consider a traditional approach to selling your property vs integrated law firm?
   - Estate agency because they are used to it
   - They have done this for years and familiar
   - Attorneys are better because estate agents have their own laywers
   - As long as the attorneys do same job as estate agents and using law firm is time saving for seller

2. Do you have an experience with an integrated law firm?

3. What kind of service are you looking for from an integrated law firm?

   - Quick turnaround times
   - Professional and good service
   - Race (black), female owned
   - Provide pitch deck on other services that they would offer the client

4. What has been your overall experience with the integrated conveyancing and real estate services provided by the firm? (if applicable)
   -

5. Can you describe any specific incidents that positively or negatively impacted your experience? (if applicable)
   - If service is bad then would not go back to using integrated law firm

6. How do the integrated services compare to previous experiences where these services were not integrated? (if applicable)

   - black agent explained the process

   - more transparency

   - very professional however levies were

   - better information for first time buyers to help them understand costs better in making informed decisions

7. What aspects of the integrated service do you find most beneficial?
   - One stop shop
   - Doesn’t have to go looking around for various persons in the transactions
   - Advice from law firm not the same as agent as more knowledgeable than an agent
   - Peace of mind that comes with using an attorney firm

8. What are your expectations with regarding the integrated services?
   - Knowledgeable about process at the deeds and property market

9. What improvements, if any, would you suggest to enhance the services provided?

10. How much would you expect to pay for such a service?
   - 3-5% of the purchase price

11. Is there anything else you would like to add?
   - No

<u>B. FOR BUYERS/SELLERS</u>

<u>34 years, Female, Buyer</u>

1. What would make you consider a traditional approach to selling your property vs integrated law firm?
   - The traditional process assumes that the buyer has some level of control in the purchasing process. A key determining factor are cost savings in the process.

2. Do you have an experience with an integrated law firm?
   - Yes
3. What kind of service are you looking for from an integrated law firm?
   - Comprehensive legal services and offerings

4. What has been your overall experience with the integrated conveyancing and real estate services provided by the firm? (if applicable)
   - The process feels like one process instead of multiple processes. As a client you are not sent from pillar to post.

5. Can you describe any specific incidents that positively or negatively impacted your experience? (if applicable)
   - The estate agent handled most parts with the conveyancing firm. The conveyancing handled the bulk of the legalities and provided legal advice on other prospects that could be beneficial for me.

6. How do the integrated services compare to previous experiences where these services were not integrated? (if applicable)
   - I don't know. The traditional process is what I have heard of not necessarily experienced.

7. What aspects of the integrated service do you find most beneficial?
   - A single loan application to various banks. This helps maintain the credit score. Title deed registration and estate planning.

8. What are your expectations with regarding the integrated services?
   - To receive comprehensive cover.
9. What improvements, if any, would you suggest to enhance the services provided?
   - Can't think of any

10. How much would you expect to pay for such a service?
    - A priced package would be nice instead itemising each process.+R15000min

11. Is there anything else you would like to add?
    - None

C. FOR BUYERS/SELLERS

58 years, Female, Seller

1. What would make you consider a traditional approach to selling your property vs an integrated law firm?
   - Integrated law firm: Protection of my interest.
   -

2. Do you have an experience with an integrated law firm?
   - No

3. What kind of service are you looking for from an integrated law firm?
   - Service of the sale of my property

4. What has been your overall experience with the integrated conveyancing and real estate services provided by the firm? (if applicable)
   - n/a
5. Can you describe any specific incidents that positively or negatively impacted your experience? (if applicable)
   -n/a
6. How do the integrated services compare to previous experiences where these services were not integrated? (if applicable)
   - n/a
7. What aspects of the integrated service do you find most beneficial?
   - Trust that the attorney know best as they in the field and are expects

8. What are your expectations with regarding the integrated services?
   - Professionalism

9. What improvements, if any, would you suggest to enhance the services provided?
   - Create awareness to clients about how the industry works

10. How much would you expect to pay for such a service?
    - 15% of the property value
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?
    - Most of the times when selling a property, you are not aware of the rules and regulations of the industry, hence the need for creation of awareness
    - I would also like the firms to assist in bond registration by educating both seller and buyers on how the process works and how can it be done quicker considering all the requirements from the financial houses
    -

SECTION C: FOR BUYERS/SELLERS

66 years, Male, Seller

12. What would make you consider a traditional approach to selling your property vs integrated law firm?

    -Intergrate approach is preferred as I would not have to find different service providers, this would be cost saving approach.

13. Do you have an experience with an integrated law firm?
    - No

14. What kind of service are you looking for from an integrated law firm?
    - Conveyancing
    - Estate Agent
    - Accountant/Book-keeper
    - Tax Consultant

15. What has been your overall experience with the integrated conveyancing and real estate services provided by the firm? (if applicable)
    - N/A
16. Can you describe any specific incidents that positively or negatively impacted your experience?

- Positive: All services would be found in one place, this would save my time of moving around looking for various services from different people, also of importance the director of the firm would be accountable for any services or work that did not go according to plan
- Negative: The searching of a person to sell the property an individual estate agent coupled with looking for a conveyancer, tax consultant for SARS purposes and an accountant would be time consuming.

17. How do the integrated services compare to previous experiences where these services were not integrated? (if applicable)
    - N/A
18. What aspects of the integrated service do you find most beneficial?
    - Time saving
    - Money saving
    - Less administrative work to be done by me

19. What are your expectations with regarding the integrated services?
    - Selling of property will be quick
    - Calculation of money due to SARS will be accurate and paid over in time
    - Easy property transfers
20. What improvements, if any, would you suggest to enhance the integrated services provided?
    - More efficiency and professionalism

21. How much would you expect to pay for such a service?
    - 10% of all the costs involved in the selling of the property

22. Is there anything else you would like to add?
    - As I have said an integrated approach compared to the traditional approach is more favourable as that leads to one person accountable and that is the director of the firm. Furthermore,due to the busy world integrated approach is for a time saving approach, in fact that is the one I would recommend to be followed by all property sellers as I consider it to be a one stop shop.