

Judy Foster on what's needed to make it in the property industry

By  Sindy Peters

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Jawitz Properties recently expanded its national reach with the launch of its Tygerberg franchise in the Western Cape, led by Judy and Hilton Foster.



Judy and Hilton Foster, Jawitz Tygerberg

The couple moved to Johannesburg from Cape Town in 2020 to explore work opportunities after Hilton was retrenched just prior to lockdown, but they always aimed to return to their roots, and opportunity came knocking sooner than expected.

Responding to a Facebook ad promoting Jawitz franchise opportunities in the Western Cape, the duo realised that with Hilton's experience in operations and Judy's background and expertise in the property industry, it was an opportunity they could not ignore.

They've since relocated back to Cape Town and opened their franchise in May this year, hiring five intern realtors to help manage the 73 suburbs in the Tygerberg region.

This #WomensMonth, we caught up with Judy who shared a bit about her journey in the property space so far, what she loves most about the industry, as well as key trends to watch out for in the market.

■ Tell us a bit about yourself and your background?

I have been in the property game since 2002. I joined a small local estate agency after my husband was transferred back to Cape Town at the end of 2001. Luckily for me, I was on duty at our offices one Saturday morning and got my first sale from a walk-in in my second week on the job. As they say, the rest is history!

■ What does a typical workday look like for you?

We are extremely busy at the moment — starting a new franchise takes a lot of hard work and commitment. My focus is on sales, which means doing the basics and hard yards again to create visibility and brand awareness by offering valuations, finding leads, and then growing our listings and, ultimately, exclusive mandates to sell.

I am also the mentor for our new interns. I firmly believe that on-the-job training and coaching has enormous value, and so I spend time showing them how to canvas and make those tough cold and warm calls in order to create a solid database of potential clients.

“ It's all about leading by example, and following a disciplined routine of actions/activities week in and week out is what will deliver the desired results and lead to our success. ”

■ What do you love most about working in the property sector?

Cape Town is a sought-after and dynamic market — I mean, who doesn't want to live in Cape Town? We feel privileged to be back here where our roots are. We will never again take it for granted - Cape Town will be our forever home.

There are huge opportunities in our Tygerberg area, which will enable us to grow and thrive, thus creating a sustainable business for the future and leave a generational legacy for our family.

Speaking more generally, the property sector allows me to be flexible in terms of time management and to pounce on new opportunities as they present themselves. The secret weapon is the Jawitz model, whose methodologies and values have stood for 54 years. Following that vision is enabling us to set up a stable business foundation.



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■ Unpack for us some of the key trends in the Tygerberg property market right now?

The first point to make is the obvious one: Tygerberg is in Cape Town, so we benefit from the strong market demand for properties here. Cape Town's drawcards are a well-managed local government, a fabulous lifestyle, and a vibrant multi-cultural and recreational scene. The investment potential for property remains strong.

The latest stats indicate that the banks are approving 96% of all residential bond applications, and Cape Town is still holding its own in terms of property growth values and number of sales per area.

“ A lot of that growth is being driven by international buyers and semigration from other parts of the country. ”

All this means is that Cape Town property has value and offers a good investment. The huge potential in Tygerberg is that it offers something for everybody — and being slightly inland, it's well-priced and accessible to the CBD and airport via the N1 highway and rail network.

Properties generally offer more space and affordability, and there are homes for the entry-level buyer, the middle-income earner who seeks to upgrade their property or move to a better area, and the higher-income earner who will consider our luxury property portfolio above R7.5m.

The area boasts first-class facilities, with great schools and sports grounds, as well as a bustling commercial district and malls. The area has excellent medical facilities, including the Netcare N1 City Hospital, Panorama Mediclinic, with its renowned heart unit facilities, as well as the Louis Liepoldt and Karl Bremer Hospitals.

■ What are some of the major challenges and opportunities ahead for the franchise?

One of the biggest challenges the industry faces is recruitment. We need both new agents who are eager to build their

career, as well as seasoned agents who still have tenacity and passion for the industry.



Judy Foster, Jawitz Tygerberg

Although we are fortunate in having a great area, we are still affected by the overall economic situation, which is currently marked by lower business confidence, interest rates that have risen consistently in the last two years, political uncertainty and our ever-challenging energy crisis. Agents need to be able to proactively manage these cycles in order to show good results.

The big advantage is that people still need a roof over their heads, so if they are buying or renting, Jawitz Properties Tygerberg can fulfil their needs and find them a home.

“ We took a risk by starting a newfranchise business during the downturn, but we’re positioning ourselves for the uptum. ”

The cycle will turn and start moving in a more positive direction. As a business and as individual agents, we need to be ready and prepared to react to the changing market conditions, and capture these opportunities when they present themselves.

■ ***Where do you believe does the value lie in a diverse, inclusive work environment, particularly in terms of gender representation?***

Jawitz Properties was founded on family values 54 years ago, and those values still stand true today. Jawitz Properties Tygerberg is also a family business, although on a much smaller scale, but was founded on those same values. Diversity and inclusion are the cornerstones that our business will be built on. This includes nurturing our staff and unlocking the creative minds of all our people by creating an open environment and one that allows them to excel. As the Rainbow Nation, diversity is our strength and the same applies to our business!

One example of the type of culture we are building is our policy that whoever gets to the office first gets to park in the two Jawitz Properties branded parking spaces. These parking spaces are not for bosses, but for any of us - so first at work, first in the parking!

■ ***Based on your experience, what advice would you give to women pursuing a career in property today?***

Property is a tough and demanding industry, but also very rewarding for those agents that do the basics well, are not afraid of hard work, don't get intimidated when someone says no, and just love engaging with people to build lasting relationships.

“ One needs to be financially stable when entering this industry, as there is no such thing as making a ‘quick buck’, but it can be very lucrative. ”

I will not sugar-coat the challenges of this industry, but I do highlight the benefits to those brave enough to join it.

■ ***How is Jawitz Properties Tygerberg supporting and empowering women in the property sector?***

We, as Jawitz Properties Tygerberg, are serious about doing the right thing and empowering the women in our business.

We have employed a female intern who I am mentoring. She is learning the whole real estate sales process and is starting to show great progress.

Our young female receptionist is clearly somebody with huge potential, and so we engaged with her to plot a way forward.

After only three months, she has already moved up into a bigger role as office administrator. We're proud that the environment we created gave her the space to step up and take on more responsibility, to grow as a young person entering the property business world, and to set her goals for the future.

🍷 ***Do you have any pearls of wisdom to share this Women's Month or words of encouragement?***

You must dream big and have a goal. Write down the goal so you hold yourself accountable.

Knowledge is power: stick to one area and really get to know it and your client base very well.

“ *Building personal relationships with clients is the key to success.* ”

It all begins with face-to-face contact, and I believe that after 12 or so 'touch points' with the client, you are setting the foundation for a genuine relationship.

Lastly, allow yourself 'me' time as it is important to have some fun along the way!

ABOUT SINDY PETERS

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