

The Negotiator Conference & Expo 25

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Session 4

Facing seismic change in agency

Helen Charlesworth, Group CEO, Connells



Connells is looking ahead to 2026, identifying how to drive growth, embrace change and empower people. We have shaped our vision for an industry undergoing seismic change.”

About Connells

Connells is a family of more than 80 estate agency and property service brands, spanning sales, lettings, mortgages, legal services, surveyors, valuations and disruptive products.

There are 21 estate agency trading entities but consolidation is not on Connells’ radar: each property brand’s heritage, skills and specialisms is respected. Connells is also committed to the High Street and will continue to invest in branches over the next 5 years. For the group, the human connection matters when someone is selling their greatest asset.

Setting future values

Connells interviewed almost 5,000 employees in the group to create a new set of corporate values for the future - the ethos and beliefs come from in house and not from an outside consultancy.

Reforming the home buying & selling process: ahead of the curve

Connells recognises the fragmented and frustrating home moving landscape. Its group data will help it improve the process and it intends to do this before policy mandates change. Connells has already formed strategic partnerships and collaborations to be fit for the future. It is now a stakeholder in LMS as it is highly-focused on a digital-first journey. Trials with LMS have already resulted in a 17% reduction in time taken from listing to completion; a 43% reduction in cancellations, and a 30-day reduction between offer accepted and exchange.

An instinct for improvement

Connells is seeking to improve prospects for everyone. Better customer options include improved accessibility via branch, phones and online, with communication channels lined up together. It also strives for one customer relationship management (CRM) system to better service the needs of its clients. The future will also herald a responsible adoption of AI, used to spot patterns in data and to support staff.

Better employee options include creating career pathways for employees. This includes exploring an agency qualification. Improvements are also coming in the form of a better culture within the business, including birthday leave across the group, and enhanced maternity and paternity packages. These improvements send important signals. Importantly, they are across the Connells group and all 21 estate agency entities for complete parity. This helps build loyalty that, in turn, results in better customer service.

Q&As

Q How do you keep consistency across all of the estate agency brands?

A There are 7 brand families so not everyone is lumped in together - identities are kept true to their roots but there is continuity. There is a standardised training programme across the group and this programme is audited to ensure high standards in every use case. We train for more than 75,000 hours a year, and each training programme is tailored to each brand. ■