

CASE STUDY

Valunation



Valunation increases efficiency and productivity with Q-Mobile

Valunation Chartered Surveyors is the residential surveying division of the Spicerhaart Group, which is the UK's largest independent integrated property group. Spicerhaart employs more than 2,000 staff nationwide and has an award-winning sales and lettings branch network. Companies within the Spicerhaart Group include Chewton Rose, Darlows, Felicity J Lord, Haart and Haybrook.

From Aberdeen to Yeovil and Aberystwyth to Yarmouth, Valunation offers residential valuations, building surveys and other property-related services to businesses and personal customers alike.

Every one of its Chartered Surveyors combines extensive experience and expertise with a detailed local knowledge, which means customers receive a professional service that is tailored to the individual needs of the customer and the relevant geographic market.

2019: A year of transformation

The evolution of technology and digital data present a wealth of opportunities for the property surveying industry and, over the last 12-months, Valunation has set to achieve a strategic goal of placing all paper-based reporting for its residential survey and valuation instructions to a fully digitised approach.

Confirms Paul Lancaster, Managing Director at Valunation: "We have been monitoring the way in which technology has been evolving in our industry for some time, and we knew that the time was right for us to adopt a digital approach to our reporting.

"The selection and roll-out of the right mobile solution for our frontline surveying teams was a strategic goal for us in 2019. As such, we have a trusted and long-standing relationship with Landmark and, in my view, it has a well-established track record of delivering the best integrated solutions to both lenders and the residential surveying industry, so we contacted the team to talk about how they could support us achieve this objective."

Landmark Valuation Services' Q-Mobile is an intuitive mobile surveying app that ensures surveyors capture the right information, efficiently and consistently, for every valuation, RICS HomeBuyer Report and Single Survey Report on a mobile device.

It provides surveyors with a dynamic site note layout, which is consistent across all lenders enabling surveyors to work very efficiently, plus site notes are automatically mapped into lender reports, removing the need for dictation or having to write reports manually. Site plans can be easily created using an intelligent sketch tool, which auto-calculates floor areas and allows surveyors to add room details, condition information and photos, from the device's inbuilt camera.

Valunation's team of over 100 surveyors now digitally capture site notes and complete reports using the latest Microsoft Surface Pro tablets. Each tablet comes pre-installed with Landmark's Q-Mobile app and enables Valunation's surveyors to increase day-to-day efficiency, improve auditing and compliance, while reducing the firm's overall costs associated with paper-based reporting and archiving.

Explains Paul, "With Q-Mobile, we can ensure we meet lender SLAs with the inbuilt sign-off functionality, which provides the flexibility for our team to sign off the site notes and the lender report on their tablets before even leaving the property, which streamlines the process. Plus, with inbuilt validation rules, our surveyors are providing the right information that every lender needs, meaning we are seeing a reduction in post-valuation questions. The time-saver here is that, if a query is raised, we can quickly identify the site notes and respond, without needing to find and interpret paper notes.

“There are many advantages to working with Q-Mobile, for example the team particularly like the fact that the Rightmove valuation comparable tool is integrated, meaning you can research and add comparables without a fuss. At the click of a button, you are taken directly to the subject property on the Rightmove SCT site and the details are mapped into the Q-Mobile site notes and lender report, removing any manual effort.”

Views from the frontline

Andy Cook is a Chartered Surveyor and has been working at Valuation for over five years, but has been in the industry for over a decade. When asked about the changes digital reporting has had on his role, Andy explains the efficiencies he's seeing to his working day:

“If I'm honest, when I first heard that we were adopting a mobile tablet for our reporting, I was worried – I thought ‘if it's not broken, why change?’ However my fears were quickly dispelled – after doing the initial trial, it couldn't be any easier and I just went all in and started to manage all valuation instructions from day one.

“It counts down the remaining aspects of the report as you tap away on the device so you know exactly what is left to do. This means there are less mistakes as I don't miss anything. Before using Q-Mobile, I used to access my PC at around 6pm every night to see what my diary looked like the next day. It would take time to load up and was frustrating; now with the tablet, it's just there. It makes it easy to stay on top of workload and any changes are quick to see. I can also add my comparables at any time – often doing this the day before, so I'm ready on the day and have everything I need with me, when at the property.”

“A big bonus for me is that I can sign-off on-site. I can get in the car, check comparables, BCIS cost tables, collate photos, and I'm ready. I do a final check when I'm home and update the comparables into Quest, as a personal form of quality control – and then it's done. I couldn't be happier with Q-Mobile – it's great.”

Meanwhile, Darren Tuck is a Senior Chartered Surveyor based in Kent. He has been working in the surveying industry for over 20 years and, when asking Darren about how he found the adoption of digital reporting, he was quick to remark on time savings he's seeing each day:

“Straight away, I could see that Q-Mobile would create a lot of labour-saving time, as well as provide other hidden benefits too. For example, before we'd have to do valuations on the computer and then take them off the computer, scan the details and email for auditing purposes – this really was time consuming. Now it's there to be viewed in the app at any time and this cuts-out all the auditing time. There's also no need to file paper copies – this in itself has saved time from having to print, scan, pack and post paperwork.

Would you like to know more about Landmark Valuation Services?

Visit landmark.co.uk/lvs

“As far as the tablet and app is concerned, I am impressed. Before, we would have to hand-write forms and then fill the details on to a computer. The labour saving is apparent – as you fill out site notes and bring in comparables, it automatically adds the data into report. It also auto-fills phrases as we go, to meet each lenders' requirements.

“The technology itself has been great – the training received was very simple; I'm not a tech junkie by any means, but I've found it intuitive. I would say using Q-Mobile is saving me at least an hour a day, which would have previously been spent doing manual reporting, checks or filing. So is certainly a worthwhile investment.”

Next steps

The roll-out of the Q-Mobile app and tablets has been deemed a success by everyone at Valuation, and now steps are underway to roll-out digital reporting for HomeBuyer Surveys, to enable the company to meet its digital-only objectives.

Concludes Paul, “Landmark as part of DMGT is financially stable and is continually investing in technology making Q-Mobile the right choice for us and our surveyors. Equally, the use of a Windows-based solution minimised the risks when integrating this into our existing infrastructure. The roll-out has been very straightforward. The time savings our team are seeing is a big advantage for our business, with savings also created now paper-based reporting and filing has dropped.

“We would like to thank the Landmark team for completing this project ahead of time with minimum impact on our day to day operations; the support that they provided during and after the roll-out has been outstanding.”

Ready to sign up?

Contact us at LVSInfo@landmark.co.uk to book a personalised demo with one of our Q-Mobile experts. They will be able to show you how Q-Mobile can help you on the go and will explain how to sign up.

