JORDAN BAIN RESEARCH · ANNUAL REPORT · EDITION 01

# The State of Modern Prospecting 2026

An annual read on how homeowners actually choose an agent — built from campaign data, observed behaviour and eight years of implementation work.

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| Published | August 2026 |
| Region | Australia & New Zealand |
| Length | 38 pages |
| Dataset | Campaign data and practice observation |

# Executive summary

The listing decision has moved earlier and the industry has not moved with it. Homeowners form a shortlist over a period measured in years, largely in private, and reach out to confirm a choice rather than to make one.

Meanwhile prospecting is still measured over thirty days. That mismatch — the measurement gap — is the most expensive error in the industry this year. It causes good strategies to be abandoned at month four, funds interruption over familiarity, and rewards the agent who is loudest this month over the agent who has been present for two years.

The agents outperforming their markets are not doing more. They have narrowed the territory, held frequency steady, and let time do the compounding.

# Key findings

### 01 · 11–24 months — The decision forms long before the call.

Between first shortlisting and signed authority, most deciding happens without the agent present.

### 02 · Month 4 — Agents abandon strategy just before it compounds.

Changes of direction cluster at the point where familiarity begins to return enquiry.

### 03 · 3 of 4 — Frequency, not budget, separates quartiles.

The top quartile does not spend materially more; it shows up steadily, in a narrower territory, for longer.

### 04 · 800 > 3,000 — A narrow territory covered well beats a wide one covered thinly.

Coverage depth predicts appraisal enquiry more reliably than audience size.

### 05 · Week 3 — Creative fatigue arrives on schedule.

Decay is predictable enough to plan for. Rotate on a calendar, not on panic.

### 06 · The gap — The industry still measures a 30-day window.

Prospecting is judged on a horizon shorter than the behaviour it tries to influence.

# Industry shifts

## Interruption → Familiarity

Cold contact still works, at falling efficiency and rising cost per conversation.

## Volume → Relevance

Reach is now cheap and attention is not, so relevance became the scarce input.

## Campaigns → Presence

A campaign has a start and an end. A presence is what a homeowner has already absorbed.

## Rented audiences → Owned assets

Portals rent attention for the length of a listing; owned assets outlive the campaign.

## Opinion → Evidence

Instinct sets the hypothesis; data settles it.

# Consumer behaviour

## Research is continuous

Homeowners check value, watch a street and form a view of who is active long before intent exists.

## Recall is unprompted

Homeowners name one agent quickly and struggle for the second. Position one is the only position with commercial value.

## Curiosity precedes intent

The first move is a small private act of curiosity, not an enquiry.

## Proof beats promise

Claims about service are discounted on arrival; observable evidence survives the shortlist.

*Limits: observations describe patterns, not causation for any individual listing.*

# Benchmarks

Published as quartiles. Find yourself in the column, not in the average.

| Metric | Bottom quartile | Median | Top quartile |
|---|---|---|---|
| Digital core area | 3,000+ homes | 1,800 homes | 1,200–1,500 homes |
| Effective frequency (monthly) | 1–2 | 3–4 | 6–8 |
| Creative rotation | Ad hoc | 6–8 weeks | 3 weeks |
| Campaign age at review | < 4 months | 6 months | 12+ months |
| Appraisal attribution | Not tracked | Last click | Window-based |

*Limits: metro and regional core areas of roughly 1,200–3,000 homes. No offline attribution.*

# Predictions

### 2026 — Attribution windows lengthen.

Agencies begin measuring against the window in which listing decisions actually form.

### 2027 — Core areas become standard equipment.

The differentiator shifts from having one to holding one long enough.

### 2027 — Intent signals get priced.

The winners will act on combinations of signals, not single ones.

### 2028 — The database splits from the audience.

Contactable audience will be reported separately from contact count.

### 2028 — Personal brand consolidates faster than office brand.

Principals will invest in agent-owned assets or lose the agent.