

Purplebricks defends company culture against bullying claims



Purplebricks home sales have slowed in Sydney. **Supplied**



by [Larry Schlesinger](#)

Purplebricks Australia has strongly defended the culture at the fixed-fee hybrid agency as it battles [an exodus of agents and territory owners](#) amid claims of a toxic work environment.

Numerous current and former agents told *The Australian Financial Review* they had been bullied, threatened and undermined at the company during the course of their employment as they struggled to make a living earning just over \$1000 per property listing [amid a slowing housing market](#).

"Purplebricks rejects the serious allegation of a bullying culture," said a Purplebricks spokesperson.

"We take all criticism of the company extremely seriously and it is disappointing to hear that a small group of former employees reported negative experiences during their time with us.

"We do not accept that these allegations reflect the culture at Purplebricks and they are not representative of the experiences of our employees. We work in partnership with our agents and are committed to investing resources to support them in changing market conditions.

"This includes many services not offered by traditional real estate agencies such as our call centre capabilities, rapidly expanding team of sales associates, marketing investment and around-the-clock buyer and seller contact platform."

'Appalling how they treat agents'

Former Purplebricks Newcastle agent Steven Bashford said anyone who achieved success "gets chopped back".

"It's appalling how they treat agents. Their behaviour is bullying," he said.

Mr Bashford claimed Purplebricks' head office would call his vendors to "draw out any complaints" against him.

"A vendor called me to say; 'Can you tell Purplebricks to stop ringing? We are happy with the service we are getting from you'," Mr Bashford said.

Former Sydney agent Richard Mirosevich said he sold 41 properties in seven months and had a 100 per cent conversion rate of appraisals to instructions before he was fired.

"I was getting great results then they sacked me without notice because I was getting too big. They took over my area and replaced me with three to four other people," he said.

"They absolutely shat on me. They said they would sue me if I took any of their clients. I was owed \$90,000. They eventually agreed to pay me \$8000 but they haven't even paid me that."

One current territory owner said agents "were frightened to death" of management while another described the workplace culture as "extremely toxic".

"Nothing more frustrating when you're at a meeting and the management team sit there and say they wouldn't be a sales person at Purplebricks," said a former territory owner.

Purplebricks' spokesman rejected these allegations strongly.

"The vast majority of our agents are excelling," he said.