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Job of the week

**Distribution Network
Manager****Location:** Richmond**Salary:** On Application**Company:** The Richmond Green Group**Job type:** Contract**Description:** We are managing the building and ongoing management and motivation of a distribution network for a major Developer.

With partners expected to sign...

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▶ Off-plan sales are continuing in a number of markets around the world, despite many buyers and investors turning away from the model following the property crash.

Overseas agents for destinations from Australia to Brazil are reporting successful sales of properties that haven't been completed or even started, often because there is little other choice for the buyers. Hamptons International is seeing continued interest for off-plan projects in Morocco, while sales are rising in the completely off-plan market of Abu Dhabi, according to consultancy Landmark Advisory.

"The majority of our overseas clients actually purchase property in the off-plan stage," said Denise Casey of investment agent Australian Property Solutions. Greater choice and tax incentives make off-plan purchases more attractive, she said. "As well as these reasons, Australia has a chronic housing shortage in most of its major cities, thus there is quite a supply and demand imbalance."

Developers, too, are recording strong off-plan sales. In its Caribbean resorts, developer Harlequin Properties is selling around 400 off-plan properties a month, while Barrasford & Bird Worldwide is enjoying one of its busiest sale seasons for two years at Halcyon Hills in Greece.

Changing sentiment

The off-plan outlook is not healthy everywhere, however. Spain has been left with a glut of unfinished and unwanted properties and horror stories in such emerging destinations as Bulgaria have caused confidence to collapse.

Press reports have played a critical role in changing people's attitudes towards off-plan, according to Hamptons' international sales manager Dean Foley. "Globally, sentiment is for built properties," he said. "In places like Dubai you've gone from selling everything off-plan to selling nothing."

The majority of investors have been put off buying off-plan completely, according to Stuart Law, chief executive of Assetz property investment brokers. "The off-plan overseas market has probably reduced by 80 or 90% we would estimate both in the UK and abroad," he said. "Consumers are avoiding off-plan whilst there is any risk of prices going down as the very benefit of off-plan in a rising market reverses when it goes down."

Good service needed

But not all companies have seen such a dramatic change in buyer attitude. "An agent with a good product, comprehensive service and professional after-sales team shouldn't have seen any difference in buying habits over the last six months," said Robin Barrasford of Barrasford & Bird.

While buyers feel confident if they can see the finished property, it's not necessarily an easier sale, according to Samantha Gore, sales and marketing manager at agent UV10, which has seen off-plan sales in Brazil. "Selling off-plan is fine as long as you've got set dates for completion and the buyer is comfortable with the location and the developer," she said. "People are thinking long-term and if there's an exit strategy and good infrastructure in place they'll be happy."

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