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MATTHEWS and Son team yesterday... Gus Van Bladel, left, Bob Macoun and Ken and Trevor Matthews. Picture: ROBERT NG

Why is this the most user-friendly real estate team in Queensland?

By LUKE COLLINS

A NEW national survey has named a little-known Annerley firm among Australia's top 10 user-friendly real estate companies.

According to researchers Test Purchasing Australia, R. Matthews and Son Pty Ltd was the only Queensland real estate firm to make the list of Australia's top 10 agencies.

The Ipswich Rd agency scraped in at number 10.

The firm's managing director, Trevor Matthews, grandson of founder Robert Matthews, said while they had been surprised at the mention they were more than willing to accept the position as Queensland's top dog.

"It was surprising because I didn't know anything about it," Mr Matthews said, referring to Adelaide-based Test Purchasing's method of anony-

mously evaluating firms.

"But we've been around a long time and I guess you always think you do the job and do it well."

Test Purchasing's survey involved polling thousands of people around Australia to determine a shortlist of about 400 real estate agencies.

Researchers then approached individual firms posing as potential customers to measure the agencies in four categories — professionalism, interest in the vendor and their property, marketing innovations and strategies, and the standard of auction services.

Mr Matthews said the major element behind R. Matthews and Son's success was the firm's family foundations.

It was founded in 1933 by Robert Matthews and the "son" in the name was Trevor's father Les.

"We're an old family company with a family tradition built on trust," Trevor Matthews said.

"Over the years we've been approached by all of the different groups to join them, but we've been able to get business without having to join up."

He said his son was already helping at the agency and he hoped to pass the business on to him one day.

Test Purchasing's managing director Roseanne Healy said the survey results had been surprising, most notably because of the absence of large national agencies.

"Our findings show that the consumer prefers a personalised and professional service," Ms Healy said.

"Unlike their competitors, the market leaders do not rest on their laurels but take a more pro-active role in the industry."

She said while getting in the top 10 was obviously difficult, she was disappointed with Queensland's showing overall, given the level of real estate activity in the state.

Agencies from New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia filled out the remaining top 10 spots with three firms from each state taking honors.

"It's disappointing that the Gold Coast is not represented at all," she said.

"From Queensland's point of view, it's great that someone got in but it just shows there's plenty of room for improvement."

The top 10 firms in order of quality were: Hocking Stuart (Vic), Toop and Toop (SA), Peter Anderson (NSW), McGrath Partners (NSW), Brock Younger (SA), Di Jones (NSW), J.R. Buxton (Vic), Bernard H. Booth (SA), Hodges (Vic) and R. Matthews and Son (Qld).