



## CASE STUDY

# Century Group

## CONTEXT

Century Group, a B.C. real estate developer, opened the first of its 900+ units of a housing project in Tsawwassen and began an online campaign to promote and sell its offering to prospective home-buyers. The client wanted to understand the effectiveness of their promotional material and its impact on their target audience.

Located on the southwestern peninsula southwest Delta in B.C., Tsawwassen is a residential community that is also home to the ferry terminal from Lower Mainland to the Vancouver Islands and southern Gulf Islands.

## CHALLENGE

In the midst of COVID-19, Century Group had to adapt their marketing outreach and promotional strategies to comply with social distancing protocols and the subsequent ban on open houses. Also in this new environment, the client wanted to understand how best to capture people's attention and if COVID-19 had any impact on people's opinion around home purchasing.

Tsawwassen was not top of mind in places most people would consider moving. Apart from those who already had an existing relationship with Tsawwassen (i.e. those who had relatives or friends living there) or were already resident in Tsawwassen and looking to downsize, people considered the community far from downtown and mostly, a place for seniors, large malls, and the ferry. Century Group wanted to explore who could be their likely target audiences and what features would be most attractive to them.

## SOLUTION

In November 2020, Stratcom conducted online focus groups to explore active home-buyers' decision-making habits around purchasing a home for personal use in Tsawwassen, and more specifically, Century Group's offering at Southlands.

Testing Century Group's video collateral and website text, the focus groups were designed to explore top of mind issues



*I was very pleased with how the work was done right from the initial concept work, formulating the questions and preparing the moderator's guide. Stephanie understood our real estate development business and quickly grasped what we were trying to achieve with this research. The recruiting was well done and the communications in advance of the groups was superb, as was the conducting of the groups.*

*I knew when I recommended we do this research work with Stratcom it would be well done. My expectations were exceeded.*

**Bob Ransford**  
Vice President, Development



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when considering home purchase and explore views on Tsawwassen as a possible community to consider for home purchase.

# Results

Stratcom conducted four online focus groups of potential homebuyers from throughout BC's Lower Mainland, comprised of a good mix of gender, age, ethnic backgrounds and family makeup. All participants were pre-qualified to be looking and able to purchase a home for themselves or their families in the next 12 months. The respondents viewed the client's website, videos, language and live promotional material.

The online format led to larger group discussions than in-person and delivered immediate "live" feedback between the moderators and the client in the back room. The respondents were highly engaged and had rich, lively, deep and broad conversations full of surprises and mostly, positive feedback.

The research also helped discern that people had lots of assumptions about Tsawwassen unless they already had a previous relationship with the community. Results from the focus group found higher engagement and better feedback from most respondents as their knowledge of both Southlands and Tsawwassen grew. Deeper exploration into this new segmented group uncovered that these people would move to Tsawwassen but it just had not been on their radar.

Further, respondents' feedback indicated new features that were appealing that not been identified in existing collateral including Tsawwassen's access to the beach, islands, US border crossing and its sense of community.

Based on the findings, Stratcom made a number of concrete recommendations that the client ultimately agreed and aligned with, including changing a number of elements in the collateral, refining the sales strategy and considering limited updates to some elements of the project design. The focus groups also produced valuable intelligence on what the audience viewed as comparable housing options and where prospective homebuyers were searching in the absence of in-person viewings.

## Significance:

Century Group's online focus groups illustrated a successful example of understanding target audiences' needs and challenges in a new COVID-19 environment based on remote, virtual interactions.

- Online focus groups were key for a number of reasons. They helped to understand the landscape of opinion and grasping the relevance of specific issues and identifying unanticipated and unprompted issues. For example, the research showed a new target audience of people who did not rule out Tsawwassen as a potential community to move to.
- Further, the online focus groups helped inform a more immediate understanding of the audience, including how they think and the language they use that was immediately addressed in collateral. Insights generated from the sessions were implemented in Century Group's live website, video collateral and marketing materials.
- Weary from a previous facilitator experience, the client turned to Stratcom to perform the research and were very satisfied with the results. Century Group reported finding the online groups very helpful and appreciated our staffs' hands-on approach.