

# Building trust and business

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A new mobile app, called Honest Abe, aims to stimulate employment by matching and building trust between home owners and tradesmen. Its cofounders, James Mittan and Derick Bolton, both work in the building services industry just outside Cape Town.



They've named their app Honest Abe, the moniker given to Abraham Lincoln because of his unswerving belief in truth. "We've seen how a lot of smaller tradesmen struggle to find regular work," says Mittan. "This isn't because the work isn't out there, it's because many home owners are wary of inviting strangers into their homes to quote on jobs and to do the work."

Through Honest Abe, home owners in any province can list the painting, plumbing, electrical and other building-related work they would like done, even uploading photographs of a specific job's requirements onto the site ([www.honestabe.mobi](http://www.honestabe.mobi)). This is free of charge.

The app then sends an alert to tradesmen in the area who are registered on its database. Registration costs R95 and covers the cost of Honest Abe's quality control efforts. These are designed to exclude fly-by-night operators so home owners can be sure the person operates a genuine business.

Tradesmen can respond to home owners' requests for quotes online. But what really sets Honest Abe apart from standard directories and online resources is that it allows home owners to rate tradesmen on their completed work.

This feature rewards those who deliver a quality service. This should help them get new work based on their track record and to build an online reputation over time.

"The country desperately needs to find ways to help struggling tradespeople to find more work so that they can build up their businesses," says Bolton.

*Source: Financial Mail*

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