

## TrueGotham.com founder leaves Elliman

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TrueGotham.com founder [Douglas Heddings](#) is departing Prudential Douglas Elliman, saying the move will allow him greater autonomy for his popular real estate blog.

Heddings, formerly a senior vice president at Elliman, has moved to the relatively new Charles Rutenberg Realty in New York with his four-agent team, the Heddings Property Group.

Heddings, who was named one of the 25 Most Influential Real Estate Bloggers in 2007 [by Inman News](#), said while Elliman was supportive of his blog -- which sometimes reveals unsavory behavior by brokers or grim predictions about the economy -- there were times when the firm asked him to remove certain posts.

Now that he's left the company, "you're going to see more frequent blog entries and raw, bare-bones reporting," he said, adding that he will also be blogging for the Wall Street Journal and linking to his property Web site.

Heddings will be setting up shop in his own 700-square-foot office at 515 West End Avenue. Rutenberg's headquarters is located at 127 East 56th Street, but most of the company's agents work from home.

Heddings, who was at Elliman for 11 years, said he plans to grow the team to eight people by the end of the summer.

"I've always wanted to go out on my own, and Rutenberg's business model really lets you do that," he said. "It lets you be a truly independent contractor."

Unlike most brokerages in the city, Rutenberg allows agents to keep 100 percent of their commissions, charging only monthly fees for services like the company's listings system and Web site and transaction fees. For a transaction under \$1 million, an agent pays Rutenberg \$1,000; for larger deals, it's \$2,000.

Heddings said he will be assisting Rutenberg co-founders Paul Purcell and Kathy Braddock, also Elliman alums, in expanding the business.

"I feel like the industry is changing by leaps and bounds," he said. "Their business is very, very smart."

Elliman declined to comment through a spokesperson on Heddings' departure.

Heddings' posts chronicling the inner workings of the real estate industry have become popular in recent years.

He said the unvarnished opinions he posts on his blog have earned him many new clients over the years, including author Naomi Novik, who hired him to find her an apartment after discovering his blog online.

The blog "has changed my relationship with my client in such a positive way, because it's transparent and gives people a real sense of who I am," Heddings said. "If they like who I am, they call me."

He added that most clients appreciate the honesty of his posts.

"If a seller is concerned that speaking the truth is going to negatively affect their property, I don't want to work with them," he said.

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